

GRAIL

■ THAT GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED IN ALL THINGS ■

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The GRAIL



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May, the month of virginal freshness and flower-like beauty, is here again. It is the month of May queens and Mother's Day and May altars. It is above all the month of Mary, the Mother of God. We shall never appreciate the magnificent vocation of Mary until we realize how God reached out to us and embraced all people through this humble virgin. No one had ever seen God before, and behold in Mary's arms men first saw Him face to face, and His was the face of a new-born babe. No one had ever heard God's voice before, and lo! the shepherds of Bethlehem hearkened to His cry, and it was the feeble wail of a helpless infant. God knew in His wisdom that men could never get Divinity into their arms any more than they could get the Holy Trinity into their minds. So God in His Mercy became lovable and embraceable by becoming human. The Word was made flesh —through Mary—and dwelt amongst us. In celebrating Mother's Day this year let us make room in our hearts for her who is so much our mother... and yet so fresh and lovely a virgin.

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A terrible divorce has taken place between altar and home, between man's worship of God at the altar and man's service of God in everyday life. It is by the use of her sacramentals that the Church ends this divorce.



by Walter Sullivan, O.S.B.

The Farmer's Sacramentals

IF OUR HOLY MOTHER the Church seems to multiply her blessings over the farm home, and have few left for the city apartment, it is not because she is partial to her children in the country and forgetful of city children, but because she is a realist—like every woman. She knows that from the farm homes comes the world's food supply. That is why she has composed so many sacramental blessings for the farmer. That is why she has instituted the rogation days which occur this year on May 15, 16 and 17, the three days before the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord.

But these rogation prayers and the sacramental blessings for the

farmer are not for the exclusive welfare of the country people; such blessings are for the welfare of all the members of Christ's Body on earth—for those who live in little towns and big towns—for the rosy cheeked country urchin who has the wide open fields for a playground, and for the pale little girl whose backyard is closed in by smokestacks and ugly unpainted buildings—for the farmer plowing his field in the bright sun, and for the subway guard who seldom sees the light of day. For all members of Our Lord's Body are dependent on one another.

If the farmer is blessed with a good harvest the city dweller has plenty of good food; if the city

dweller makes a living wage he can buy the farmer's food. It is this universal dependence of the members of Christ's Body on one another that makes the blessing of the farmer a blessing also for the dwellers in the city apartments. It is faith that traces the origin of good food beyond the corner grocery store to the wholesale dealer—beyond the wholesale dealer to the shipper—beyond the shipper to the farmers whose job it is to produce food, and beyond the farmer to God the Creator Who gives the increase to the harvest. So it is fitting for the man or woman in the city cathedral as well as the farmer in the little rural church to pray together on rogation days: "*That Thou wouldest please to give and preserve the fruits of the earth . . . we beseech Thee hear us.*"

The litany of the Saints and the psalms sung during procession on rogation days are supplications—hence the word, rogation (from the word *rogare* which means to ask). During this season the faithful ask God to protect them from danger and disaster, and to bless especially the harvest so that the whole of Christ's Body may be fed.



The rogation days are also called the days of the minor litanies, because according to the rubric of the ritual, it is customary for the pastor and his flock to go in procession through the fields of the parish chanting the litany of the Saints and other prayers. There is another solemn procession through the fields on the 25th of April which is called the major litanies. This also happens to be St. Mark's day, but there is no connection between the Evangelist's feast and the procession.

Because most of our modern parishes are in the city and small town, and have no fields through which to march, the rogation day procession usually takes place on the parish property, or even inside the parish church itself; here at St. Meinrad's the student-body together with the people of the parish march in solemn procession to the chapel of Our Lady of Monte Cassino a mile through the village and across the valley, chanting the litany of the Saints. There the Mass of rogation is offered by the priest in charge of the abbey farm.

The celebration of the minor and major litanies are only four days during the year when the Church solemnly asks blessings upon the harvest, but besides the rogation day blessings there are

numerous sacramentals in the Roman ritual which may be used with spiritual profit by the faithful especially by the folks who live on the farm. Here are some of the principal blessings which the Christian farmer may use.

Blessing of a farm
 Blessing of a spring or well
 Blessing of a stable
 Blessing of draft animals
 Blessing of domestic animals
 Blessing of cattle and herds
 Blessing of a granary
 Blessing of young crops
 Blessing of sick animals
 Blessing of bees
 Blessing of sheep
 Blessing of new seed
 Blessing of oats
 Blessing of feed for animals
 Blessing of fields
 Blessing of swine
 Blessing of goats
 Blessing of orchards
 Blessing of vineyards
 Blessing of the stored harvest

The blessings of the Church are inexhaustible. Realizing that in our daily work we often forget that the milking of cows, the pruning of the fruit trees and the threshing of the grain is the indirect worship of God—the Church sacramentalizes even the humble pig and the tiny bee. Sometimes the most beautiful poetry is contained in the simplest

prayer or blessing. We have selected only a few of the farmer's sacramentals that our readers may see for themselves the riches of that precious book, *The Roman Ritual*.



Blessing Of A Farm

This prayer may be used to ask God's blessing on the entire farm together with its buildings and lands, or it may be used for the farmhouse only.

Bless, O Lord, Almighty God, this house (or, this farm); may health and purity, goodness and meekness, and every virtue reign here. May all those who dwell here be filled with faithfulness to Thy laws and with thanksgiving to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May this blessing remain on this house (or, this farm) and all who dwell here. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Blessing Of A Stable

In this as in all other blessings the reader will notice how the

Church always relates these common things to the mysteries of our Faith, like the birth of the Savior in a stable; in all her prayers the Church never forgets the dominant or main purpose of Christian life—the use of these temporal creatures in such a way as to lead the user to everlasting life in heaven.

O Lord God Almighty, Who didst will that Thy only-begotten Son our Lord, be born in a stable, and lie in a manger between two animals, bless this stable, we pray, and guard it from the spite and deceit of the devil. Make it a safe shelter for horses, cattle, and other animals. And as the ox knows his master and the ass the manger of his lord, so grant that Thy servants, who are made to Thy image and closely resemble the angels, and to whom Thou hast subjected all the sheep, and the oxen and the cattle of the pastures, be not like unto senseless beasts in whom there is no understanding. But let them acknowledge Thee alone as God and the Author of all good. May they faithfully persevere in Thy service, show Thee gratitude for favors received, and thus merit greater benefits in the future.



Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Blessing Of Draft Animals

The animals indirectly praise God by helping men to reach their final goal, and for that reason the Church blesses horses and other draft animals. In her prayer the Church calls on Saint Anthony the hermit (not the finder of lost things) who from early times was called the patron saint of farmers and animal breeders.

O God, Our refuge and our strength, give ear to the entreaties of the Church, Thou source of mercy, and grant that what we ask with faith, we may receive in fact.

Almighty, everlasting God, Who didst assist St. Anthony to emerge unscathed from the many temptations of this world, grant thy servants to progress in virtue by his illustrious example; and by his merits and intercession, free us from the ever-present dangers of life.

Let these animals receive Thy blessing, O Lord, to the benefit of their being, and by the intercession of St. Anthony, deliver them from all harm. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing Of Bees

In her blessing of the bees Holy Mother Church thinks not so much of the food of honey as she does of the precious wax out of which

are made the candles for Mass. Reading this prayer we see with the eyes of the Church how the tiny bees also glorify God by their industry.

O Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth! Thou didst create all living things for man's use. Moreover, Thou didst order by the ministry of Thy Church that candles made from the industry of bees shall burn during the Sacred Mystery in which we consecrate and consume the most holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son. Send Thy holy blessing upon these bees and this beehive to make them numerous and productive, and to preserve them from harm, so that their yield of wax can be turned to Thy honor, and to the honor of Thy Son and Holy Spirit, and to the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Blessing Of Seed

We fervently entreat Thee, O Lord, to bless these seeds, preserve and foster them with gentle breezes, fertilize them with heavenly dew, and deign to bring them to a full harvest for the use of body and soul. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Blessing Of Young Crops

We appeal to Thy graciousness, O Almighty God, that Thou

wouldst shower Thy blessings upon these first fruits of creation, which Thou has nurtured with favorable weather, and mayest bring them to a fine harvest. Grant also to Thy people a sense of constant gratitude for Thy gifts, so that the hungry may find rich nourishment in the fruits of the earth, and the needy and the poor may praise Thy wondrous name. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Blessing Of A Granary

So concerned is the Church for the farmer's welfare that even after he has his harvest of grain under roof the Church does not forget him. The harvested grain and the stored fruit need God's blessing.

O Lord, Almighty God, Who dost not desist from pouring out upon men a superabundance of heavenly dew and the substance of the earth's richness, we render thanksgiving to Thy most loving Majesty for all Thy gifts. We continue to beseech Thy clemency, that Thou wouldst deign to bless, preserve, and defend from every injury this harvest. Grant, likewise, that having had our desire for earthly needs filled, we may bask under Thy protection, praise Thy goodness and mercy without ceasing, and make use of temporal goods in such a way as not to lose eternal goods.

These are only a few of the blessings which the Church uses for the welfare of the farmer. Her ritual is filled with sacramental blessings for houses and fields, for barns and shops, for animals and tools and engines, and for almost everything that men use to make their living on earth. To every country pastor and farm family we recommend two books which contain in English the sacramental prayers and rites by which we beg God's blessing on the rural home and farm. The first booklet is called *With The*

Blessing of the Church by Bishop Joseph Schlarman of Peoria. It is published by The National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 8301 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa. The larger book which we are quoting from in our present article is a fine translation of *The Roman Ritual—The Blessings* published by Bruce Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The translation was made by Reverend Philip Weller. This last book should be in the library of every rural pastor.



WISE WORDS

- Everybody is ignorant, only in different subjects.
—Will Rogers
- People generally quarrel because they cannot argue.
—Chesterton
- Every man has a right to his opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts. —Baruch
- "Positive" means being mistaken at the top of one's voice.
- Argument with a woman is a case of "he came, he saw, he concurred."
- It is better to give than to lend, and it costs about the same.

Cows are funny people!



A short treatise on gregariousness

Grex is a Latin word that means *herd*, as *grex haedum*—a herd of cattle. Now cattle, cows, for instance, don't have much sense, so we have little in common with them. They get along pretty well by just keeping their eyes open and using their tails for fly chasers. You get the impression that they are sharp-witted when, for instance, you see them waddling behind each other into a barn, but I'll tell you how they work that. They notice the lead cow is heading east into the barn, so they just follow the west end of this cow. It's that easy. Whoever made up that word *gregarious* or *herd-like* and said that we people resemble cows in that respect had a lot of nerve. We just build near each other to make it easy for the milkman to deliver, but rarely if ever do we crowd together, and push around, and "moo" at each other. Gregarious, indeed! You'd think this fellow had seen people follow each other around, watching to see which way the other guy was going. And then I've seen cows get stubborn; they kick up and shake their ears around, and refuse to follow any suggestions as to direction, all just on some silly notion they get all of a sudden about who's running their milk-plant anyway. Well, thank goodness we're not like that! But then cows don't know they haven't any sense. It must be awful!

Sagairt Coemgen



THUNDER IN THE MOUNTAINS

by Geoffrey Gaughan, O.S.B.

a 300 year old vow is
fulfilled in the Oberammergau
Passion Play

Photos by H. Kronburger

THUNDER comes rolling down out of the mountains. Down from the tiny mountain village of Oberammergau in southern Germany it comes, spelling out in its deep, resounding voice—*The Passion of Christ—Summer, 1950.* Among the thousands of pilgrims journeying to Rome this Holy Year, those who include a visit to the world-famed *Passion Play* in their pilgrimage itinerary will find there a moving and unforgettable religious experience.

The village folk of this Bavarian hamlet look upon their presentation of the Passion of Christ as an act of religious worship, and not merely as a fascinating, colorful display of pageantry and drama. But drama it is; from its cloistered mountain world it thunders the tremendous message of the Passion and Resurrection of the God-Man. This drama is conceived in a deep faith, nurtured in a tradition of reverence and devotion, and brought to life in our 1950 with artistic genius and sincerity by these humble men and women who see in this presen-

tation of their *Passion Play* a life's vocation.

Drama and Life

Here in America we are apt to let Hollywood set our standards for judging plays, actors, and play producing. Many Americans were not shocked when they read that a well-known Hollywood actress recently told reporters that what she did in her private life in no way concerned her life or career as an actress. Acting and drama are quite differently understood in Oberammergau. For these people life is one—on stage and off. Life for them is an integrated unity; they act on the stage as they do, because that is the way they live.

To preserve reality and sincerity, no make-up is used, no wigs or false beards are allowed, no artificial lighting effects are employed on the open-air stage or in the glass-roofed interior scenes. All costumes are painstakingly authentic to Biblical times, to a great

extent being made of genuine, rare oriental materials. Before beginning work on the production, the villagers seek the approval and blessing of their Archbishop on the work.

The people of Oberammergau also evince the deep religious atmosphere in which they live by other artistic media. Long famous for their religious wood carvings, they have made this craft one of the chief means of livelihood in the village.

This year seventy Oberammergau wood-carvers have been commissioned to produce 30,000 small *Passion Play* emblems to be worn by visitors to the play. Willi Ernst, a wood-carver of Oberammergau, was awarded first prize for his pattern which combines the symbols of the Cross and the Holy Shroud. On the Holy Shroud, there is a heart painted red.

Anton Lang, Jr., whose father, Anton Lang, Sr., has played the Christus in the *Passion Play* of three decades, captures the spirit of the men and women who produce this play in his evaluation:

"Just as the ability to act seems to be in the blood of the majority, so the people of Oberammergau hold a deeply inbred feeling of personal responsibility toward their im-

portant task, their sacred tradition. They live and die for their *Play*, and I should like always to emphasize that we do not play to live, but live to play—which may at times appear incomprehensible to the hurried traveler, rushing in and out again without ever penetrating more deeply into the meaning of our life's work, habits, and customs."

1950 Production

After an interval of sixteen years, the production of this world renowned *Passion Play* is expected to attract throngs far exceeding the record attendance of 1934—over 400,000. Thirty-three performances are scheduled between May 21 and September 17, with a number of special performances to be announced later. The *Play* will be presented on all Sundays from June to the third Sunday of September inclusive; it will also be presented on all Wednesdays from June 21 to September 15. Special performances will be given on May 21, the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension, and May 29, Pentecost Monday.

The raising of the curtain is announced at 8:15 A.M. by the booming of a cannon, discharged on a hill some distance from the town. As this sound dies dis-

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Toni Preisinger as Christ



ohn: Martin Magold, Jr., born June 6, 1923. This is his first major role. Occupation—farmer.

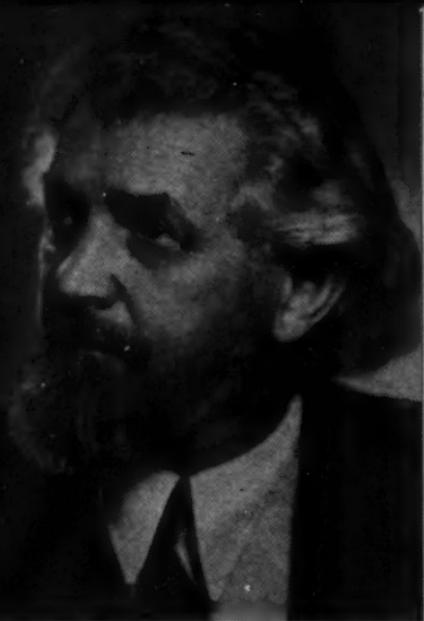


Mary: Annemie Mayr, born August 13, 1929. This is her first principal part. At present she attends the training-school for woodcarvers in Oberammergau.

tantly in the hills, a deep silence settles on the audience. This expectant silence captures the fifty-two hundred persons in the auditorium and, as the drama unfolds, holds them in reverent interest throughout sixteen acts and the twenty-four living pictures, depicting incidents in the Old Testament parallel to the life of Christ. From 12:00 noon until 2:00 P.M. there is an intermission for luncheon. As the sun sinks behind the mountains, the curtain is rung down for the last time at 6:00 P.M. on the magnificent tableau of Christ's Ascension into Heaven.

How It Started

Three hundred years ago, while the Thirty Years War was decimating Germany, a devastating plague broke out in the villages of the Bavarian Highlands. In spite of a blockade and guard kept over all approaches to the village of Oberammergau, the quarantine established by the villagers was broken. In three days the homesick culprit, Kasper Schissler, who had sneaked past the guards under cover of night, was dead, and within a short time 84 persons had joined him in the Oberammergau cemetery.



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Prologue: Alois Lang, born May 29, 1891. His previous roles were that of Nathaniel and Christ. He is a sculptor and the owner of the Hotel-Cafe "Alois Lang."

Peter: Hugo Rutz, Sr., born November 11 1886. In former productions of the *Play* he has been a member of the orchestra and chorus; he has also played the part of Caiphas.

The terror stricken peasants sought refuge in prayer and gathered in their parish church. After serious deliberation, it was decided that a vow might bring the delivering hand of God to turn away this terrible scourge. The vow was made and at once the epidemic abated. Thus in the winter of 1633 the men and women of Oberammergau bound themselves and their posterity to produce a drama depicting the Passion and Death of the Savior and to repeat the *Passion Play* every ten years. In the 316 years since the first

performance in 1634, the repetition of the spectacle every ten years has been broken only four times—three times because of war, and once it was postponed.

The play now in use was originally composed by Dom Othmar Weiss, a Benedictine from the nearby Ettal monastery. This script, first produced in 1810, was later revised (between 1840 and 1850) by a holy and learned pastor of the village, the Reverend Alois Daisenberger. It is chiefly through the efforts of this zealous shepherd that his flock earned and re-

ceived their world-wide reputation.

In his text book on the production of the *Passion Play* Father Daisenberger sets forth the very evident religious spirit that animates the play and those who produce it.

"Our main object is to represent the story of Christ's Passion, not by mere statement of fact, but in its connection with the types, figures, and prophecies of the Old Testament. By this manner of treatment an additional and stronger light will be cast upon the sacred narrative, and thoughtful spectators will be able to realize that Jesus Christ is the central figure of the inspired volumes."

The Cast

The entire cast for this 1950 production, chosen exclusively from the members of the Oberammergau community, musters more than 700 players. The *Passion Play* committee, composed of twenty-four men under the presidency of the burgomaster and the pastor, are chosen by the members of the village. Among the many duties of this committee is the delicate and all important task of selecting the cast. The prin-

pal players are named six months before the opening of the season.

The excitement of the "selection" days is for many eager aspirants the climax of ten or more years of waiting. For some the announcement of the cast is a tiding of great joy, for others, less fortunate, disappointment. To play one of the major roles is a coveted honor and the goal of a life time. Smiling faces and aching hearts live side by side for many days, but "the play is the thing" and joy and disappointment have a common grave in the consuming labor of the preparation. The moral character as well as the general appearance and acting ability of the aspirant weigh heavily in the final decision.

For the 1950 season the *Passion Play* committee named the following as principals: Anton Preisinger—Christus; Annemie Mayr—Maria, Mother of Jesus; Hugo Rutz—Petrus; Martin Magold—Joannes; Benedikt Stükle—Kaiaphas; Hans Schwaighofen—Judas; and Alois Lang—Prologue, the post traditionally allotted to the Christus of the preceding production.

Cross Shadow

The village of Oberammergau literally lives in the shadow of the cross. The Passion of Christ

is its preoccupation; men and women spend their lives training and praying for the opportunity of re-enacting this very central point of time—Christ's redeeming death. Dominating the village, thrown up as a mighty cyclorama for its daily life, is the awesome cone-shaped mountain crag—Kofel. At its peak stands a twenty-foot wooden cross, a silent sentinel, keeping watch, casting its shadow over the village below.

This towering symbol of the Christian Faith bears testimony to the message of this tiny village: that if Christ be lifted up, He will draw all men unto Himself—as the Prologue announces—in LOVE, PEACE, AND GOOD WILL.

For information concerning travel accommodations write:

Lansair Travel Service, Inc.
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1846 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington 6, D.C.

The hand that rocks the cradle----

"The pious Christian home is the best and most hallowed of all academies, and the mother is the oldest and the most cherished of all teachers. The devout Christian mother is called to be an apostle. The family circle is her field of labor; the members of the household are the souls committed to her ministry.

No teacher can adequately supply the place of the mother. No one has the same hold that she maintains on the intellect and affections of her child. She is not only an authority whose right to rule is never questioned, but also an oracle that is implicitly believed.

There is no exaggeration in saying that the hope of America is in the rising generation, and the hope of the rising generation is in its Christian mothers."

—James Cardinal Gibbons



OPEN LETTER to the GRAIL

from Sarah Benedicta O'Neill

Dear GRAIL,

Thank you for the honor you have done me by requesting an article on Benedictines and Libraries. I hope you won't mind my writing you this long letter, as I am used to writing letters and not at all used to writing formal articles.

"St. Benedict was the Founder of the Library Movement of the Early Middle Ages"—this is the heart of the matter, an oft-repeated statement which I heard not in any Catholic school, nor from any Catholic speaker, but in the class in Library Science which I attended at the University of Chicago in 1901-1902. You may be sure that after becoming a Benedictine myself at Monte Cassino (only a Secular Oblate!) I made this sentence on many occasions my theme-song. And wasn't I amazed to have it challenged and denied by a Benedictine monk, a good friend of mine! The explanation is that he simply misunderstood it to mean that St. Benedict

spent his time running around Europe founding libraries. Not at all! It never meant that. St. Benedict had something else, something better to do—to draw up his Rule and train his monks for the great work of changing the world by sanctifying themselves. But in a larger sense, the thesis is perfectly true.

Now get this straight! St. Benedict stayed at home and minded his own great business. But of all monastic legislators he was the first to insist upon reading and study as part of the discipline of perfection. He set down explicitly how much time the monk should spend in reading—so many hours in summer, so many more in winter. At the beginning of Lent each monk was to get a book from the library of the monastery, read it and report on it. Now, in order to read, the monks had to have books. In order to have books, they had to make them, and as materials were rare and costly (parchment, not



Sara Benedicta O'Neill hardly needs an introduction to the Catholic reader. Her years of devoted labor in the Catholic Library movement have won her many friends and admirers.

We give you here her personal account of these fruitful years. It is a fascinating story, one that you will enjoy even if you are not interested in books or libraries.

paper—and carefully concocted inks), they could not make many, but tried to make the few as beautiful as possible. Out of this grew the work of the *scriptoria*, the rooms where, in absolute silence, the monks carefully and laboriously copied not only the Sacred Scriptures and the works of the early Fathers, but also the Greek and Latin classics, philosophical and mathematical treatises, and thus preserved for us the Word of God's revelations and even the secular learning of the ancient world.

And thus St. Benedict, aiming only to sanctify the souls of his brethren, was the remote but very real founder of the library movement of the "Dark Ages." For, as you all well know, his Order spread over Europe, and wherever there was a Benedictine house, *there* was a library, and every great Benedictine Cathedral had its library, where the precious volumes were chained, not to keep people from using them, but to make them accessible by preventing them from being carried off.

Since the invention of printing, all this has changed. No more scriptoria, no more "chained" Bibles. Books—though expensive since the war—are nevertheless plentiful, the bad ones too plentiful. True to the traditions of their Order, the Benedictines are turn-

ing out books, periodicals, pamphlets, many of which are excellent, some superexcellent.

But *where* are the Benedictine libraries? Within the walls of their own communities, schools, and colleges, I ween. I have never heard of, or seen in any Benedictine Parish a respectable *Parish Library*. And that doesn't mean a Young Ladies Sodality Library or just a Secular Oblate Library, but a goodly collection of books useful and interesting to all parishioners, men and women, young and old, and with an attractive children's department too. A few years ago in New York I heard that the Franciscans were going to sweep the country from coast to coast with Catholic Libraries and Bookshops. If this is so, then more power to the Franciscans! But it provokes jealousy in my soul, for this is the kind of thing that of its nature belongs to the Benedictines, and we are not doing it, alas.

DEAR GRAIL of St. Meinrad's, you asked me to tell you about my own experience with the St. Benet Library and Bookshop. My burning desire for a good, big convenient Catholic Library in Chicago dated from my college days (probably before you or any of your readers were born!), when after

graduating from the Public Schools I entered Northwestern University. At that date, 1885, not one Catholic college for women existed in our entire country.

At Northwestern I was then the one and only Catholic student in the Liberal Arts Department, so that if there had been a Newman Club, I would have been the whole club, officers and members rolled into one. Being a conceited brat, I felt my importance keenly and thought that if and when I didn't know the answers, the Catholic Church was disgraced! Fortunately my good pastor, Father Hugh McGuire (God rest his soul!) had his own fine collection of Catholic books with which he was most generous. (Incidentally, he did not object to my attending N.W.U.) I always realized that of all the good human helps which with God's grace kept me from losing my faith at that dangerous period the use of this and other private libraries was the most potent. And the desire to see downtown in the Loop a big, generously liberal Catholic Library and Bookshop burned in my heart. In my heart it remained locked up until in 1924 the old Chicago Calvert Club, founded by Dr. Sapp and others, furnished me with a sympathetic audience to whom I could talk about it. Oh, it was good to discuss ways and means

with those dear Calvert people, though none of us could raise the money to rent space in the Loop. Then my indulgent sister, Mrs. Charles P. Caldwell, with whom I lived, allowed me to use her parlor for a bookshop. I boldly issued an absurd card bearing the legend, "Sara Benedicta O'Neill, Book-dealer for the Chicago Calvert Club," and announcing that I would be at home Tuesdays, afternoon and evening, and would serve tea.

The first Tuesday I had a houseful of visitors and took in fifty-six dollars. For me the millenium had dawned! The next Tuesday nobody came, and my hopes faded, but the family enjoyed the tea and cookies. However, George H. Schuster continued to print my absurd announcement gratuitously for months in the *Commonweal*. With spasmodic success I kept on, die-hard that I was, until finally convinced that people generally would rather have their clothes torn off in a crowded department store than enter a private home to buy books, even with the enticement of tea and cookies. In the dog-days of 1931, however, Fr. Timothy Rowan, then Moderator of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, offered us (the Library Committee of the Calvert Club) a corner of their space on the fourteenth floor of the Mc-

Cormick Building, Van Buren and Michigan. There we opened "The Calvert Renting Library" on Saturday, Oct. 31, 1931, proud and happy with about two hundred and fifty books and about the same number of dollars contributed. Long credit and liberal discounts had been offered by nearly all the publishers with whom I had become acquainted during those preliminary years in my sister's parlor.

For one year we shared the room of the Council—long enough to discover that carrying on a library in the same quarters with another and totally different activity is a pain in the neck and a headache for both in spite of good will. A happy change, when a year later we moved over to the C.Y.O. Building, where we were soon given an independent little room with running water, where both the Council and Bishop Sheil left us quite free to work out our own salvation. There for about ten years two good Protestant gentlemen, Mr. Philip Peck and Mr. Curtis, owner and manager of the building, gave us rent-free nice rooms with running water, small but big enough for our needs, and of course on various upper floors, as available.

IN 1937 we had ourselves incorporated and changed our name

from "Calvert" to "St. Benet Library and Bookshop." The Board of Directors included my two friends and able assistants, Mrs. Mary Foote Coughlin and Miss Laura M. Wright, and myself. This incorporation was a subtle way of making it known that, if anyone wanted to die and leave us some money or make us a substantial gift without dying, it was all right with the State of Illinois and likewise with us. It must have been a little too subtle. None took the hint and there was neither legacy nor gift. The old Chicago Calvert Club was then extinct and the choice of "St. Benet" for our new name was a happy one as Mrs. Coughlin and I were both Benedictine Oblates. You probably know that "Benet" is the short English form of "Benedict." There were two reasons for choosing the shorter form: it gave us an opportunity to tell about the importance of the Benedictine Order in the Christianizing of England, and it saved several dollars paying for the gilt-lettered sign on our windows. The one drawback is that many still mispronounce it "Benay," which gives me a cold chill and a hot flash! Don't be misled by the single "n"; the pronunciation is exactly the same as "Bennet" or "Bennett," all being forms of "Benedict."

Thus we struggled along, happy though poor, the very Cinderella of all Chicago Libraries, with but scant hope of ever getting up out of the ashes. We took in barely enough to pay current office expenses and one librarian. We paid for books (always a deficit) from private donations. We charged three cents a day rental and took up a ten-cents collection for tea at our Saturday afternoon *causeries*. You would laugh if you could have seen some of our funny little make-shifts to save money. We had really little to encourage us except our enthusiasm, which fortunately was of the Irish brand that thrives on defeat. But finally came what we thought was the zero hour, when for two whole days no one but the librarian and myself crossed our threshold! The next week we had our usual birthday party of the Library on the Saturday nearest to Hallowe'en, and I broke it gently to our twenty-five or thirty guests that that party would probably be our last since it didn't seem worth while to continue.

Four days later the miracle!—a proposal of marriage to poor Cinderella (St. Benet's) from Prince Charming (C.Y.O.)!! The Prince's father, the King (Bishop Sheil), after letting his son box and bowl for a number of years, decided that a school (The Sheil

School of Social Studies) would be a good thing for the young Prince, who would want Cinderella to help him with his studies. His Majesty sent his ambassador to Cinderella's mother (me) with this marvelous offer: that if she would give her daughter in marriage to Prince C.Y.O., the King would establish the young couple in a beautiful palace (an elegantly furnished suite) *on the ground floor* (Oh, joy!), give her two full time librarians, allow the mother and all the old personnel to remain, and assume the entire financial responsibility! With all her happy heart the mother consented, making only one condition—that the name "St. Benet" should never be changed. To this his Excellent Majesty smilingly agreed and the work on the new palace (39 E. Congress St.) began immediately. On the last Saturday of February, 1943, the palace was opened and the "wedding" was officially and joyfully and liturgically celebrated when Bishop Sheil sprinkled the bride and blessed her with the Church's lovely blessing for libraries! That would have been a day of perfect bliss had not the uniformed boys among our wedding guests reminded us that a cruel war was on. For the next few years, to serve these soldiers and seamen and airmen was our greatest privilege.

I must not forget to mention that the generous Bishop Sheil at once changed our rate of rental from "3¢ a day for each book" to "2 books free for two weeks."

Now, novels usually end with a happy marriage, but this marriage between C.Y.O. and the Library was only the beginning of greater adventures, the latest of which was our removal last summer to a large and gorgeous room, or rather a hall on the other side of the same building, 506 South Wabash Avenue, a removal required by the projected construction of the Congress Highway, which will cut off part of the C.Y.O. Building. These new premises are fairly breath-taking! Air-conditioned, spacious, with a rotunda and fluted columns, hand-made Mexican furniture and lovely murals inherited from the Travel Bureau which preceded us here. You *must* come in and see it all!

Now let me tell you that the motive of this personal history is the hope that some of you, especially Benedictine Oblates, may be inspired and encouraged to open in your own town or parish a Catholic Library and Bookshop. Here are a few hints, "do's" and "don't's" for these hoped-for ambitious readers:—

- Every January the Publishers' Weekly, 62 W. 45th St., N.Y. (19),

puts out a number giving local addresses of all publishers in the U.S.A. active the previous year. This list is absolutely indispensable and doesn't cost much.

- Don't let anything tempt you to combine with your Library the sale of Church goods. The books and what's in them will require all your attention. But Christmas cards and other greeting cards will be a help financially. Well selected pamphlets will be a valuable adjunct. We have done well with the Encyclicals and with liturgical pamphlets. But remember that nearly every church has its pamphlet rack.



- Don't make an unqualified public appeal for used books. People will send you all sorts of trash that they want to get rid of, and after getting rid of it yourself, you'll have to sit down and, with clenched teeth perhaps, write a nice letter of thanks.

- Be content to make a very small beginning. Don't be tempted by publishers' offers of long-term credit and generous discounts to get involved in debts that you can't pay.



• Try hard to get a space, even the tiniest, without paying rent. After a ground-floor room on a busy thoroughfare, the next best location is near the church door. A friend of mine made a fine beginning in a little room off the narthex of her parish church. (I need hardly tell readers of the GRAIL that "narthex" is the correct name for what is commonly called "vestibule.") A Catholic gentleman, hearing the word for the first time, said to me: "I don't know where that is, but it sounds as if it were somewhere between the larynx and the thorax."

• An intelligent and cooperative pastor (and there are many such) will offer you this space, if he can, and he will help you enormously by mentioning your library from the pulpit. But even if he is lazy, you might move him by telling him the books would be doing some of his work while he sleeps!

• As your business grows, the combination of library and bookshop will become difficult. But you will need the shop to carry the expenses of the library, and you will get a better discount as a dealer than as librarian. So hold on to both activities.

• Almost from the beginning we have served tea every Saturday afternoon, combined with what

one boy called "untrammeled conversation" (not just gossip), quite informal, usually suggested by the books or by some important Catholic news. This has been a lovely feature of St. Benet's.

• Try to attract non-Catholics by handling *good* books not specifically Catholic. We think these words of Our Lord, which you will find in the Gospel of St. Mark, Chapter 9, verse 39, a good guide for book-selection: "For he that is not against you is for you." We give Protestant clergymen and seminarians the same discount as we give our own.

• Don't exclude the poor. If you do, your work will surely fail. If you know a client is out of work, carry him along, rental free for a good while. God won't let you lose by this.

• Don't have an army of volunteer librarians; if you do, your records will soon be confused and inaccurate.

• Try to get a little free publicity from your diocesan paper. Our *New World* for several years gave

us a little "column" of brief book reviews, a wonderful help from week to week.



Now, if you can get a little free space, with a few hundred dollars to spend and a few books to lend, be courageous and make a start. Remember, I started in my sister's parlor, and when my sister needed her parlor, I used my own bedroom for a bookshop. (Oh, a marvelous room with book cases supplemented by grocery boxes covered and lined with oil-cloth! It was heavenly to live and sleep there.) Much better to begin small and humble and see the thing grow, than to start with a big splurge and see it fail.

I don't think a library like ours will ever be a money-making concern. Even now, after eighteen years, it is running *not* for profit, decidedly not, for though we take in enough, thank God, to pay for books and current expenses, there is always a deficit, made up by the generous Prince C.Y.O. A sorry showing from a financial point of view, isn't it? But on the "credit" side of the ledger we have some imponderables that make us feel it is all worth while:

conversions, vocations to convents and to the holy priesthood, Catholic marriages, friendships formed and sealed for life and eternity, shaky Catholics restored to faith, students assisted with their theses, a deep and lasting interest aroused in the Liturgy of the Church, the Psalms, the Missal, the Divine Office. To this has contributed our recitation or chanting of Compline at the close of our week's work, late Saturday afternoon.

The young monk who asked me for this article used to visit the "St. Benet" frequently and was greatly impressed by the number of distinguished people he met there. I know he would be disappointed if I didn't mention them. We now rejoice in frequent but all too brief visits from our beloved Benefactor No. 1, Bishop Sheil, and then Father Cardinal, Director of the Sheil School, and Monsignor Peter Meegan, that Big Brother of the poor. And when in town Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sheed and Donald Attwater have made the St. Benet their headquarters. Among occasional visitors we have had more Bishops and Monsignori than I could possibly name. The first Abbot to call was Abbot Ignatius Esser. Abbot Wilfred Upson, of Prinknash, England, gave us one glorious evening about two years ago

on the feast of St. Benedict. Last year we had Prior Alban Boultwood, of Washington, D.C., and Prior Gregory Borgsted, of Portsmouth, R.I. Jacques Maritain gave us a Saturday afternoon years ago, and then we were electrified to learn from his own lips that he too is an Oblate of St. Benedict! In the winter of '46-'47 our frequent visitor was dear Dom Mauro Inguanez, librarian of Monte Cassino Abbey before the bombing and the greatest paleographer in Europe. (Also the humblest of all our guests. We found him one afternoon in the library's kitchen, washing and wiping the dishes after tea! A noble example, seldom followed—once perhaps by Frank Sheed.)

Years ago we enjoyed the visits of Christopher Hollis and his charming wife; of Dom Albert Hammenstede, the distinguished Prior of Maria Laach Abbey in Germany; of Joseph Bonnet, the world-famous organist from Paris—also an Oblate; and later of the great and dear Father Reinhold, "H.A.R." of *Orate Fratres*; and also of the genial editor of *O.F.*, Dom Godfrey Diekmann. This list could be made much longer, but



I think it is long enough to satisfy the young monk who brought this long letter upon you, dear Grail.

In conclusion, let me remind you that one of the great evils of the day is that the movies, the radio, and now television are sapping the human mind by taking away the power and the desire to read. More than ever we need good and attractive books and libraries to coax people, especially Catholics, to read. And library work is so very pleasant and stimulating. Mine has honestly made my old age (I'm now 80) the very happiest time of my life. And if and when I ever get to heaven, I'll be annoying all the Angels and Heavenly Powers until there's a good library in every parish of the world.

So long now (and I'm sure you're saying that about this letter).

Yours truly,
Sara Benedicta O'Neill
Obl. O.S.B.

The MEDAL

by Mary Fabyan Windeatt

Sister Catherine Labouré has had several visions of the Blessed Virgin, who tells her to have a special medal made. Interest in the new medal is widespread in France. But some are ashamed to wear the medal about the neck. Sister Catherine wonders what to do.

Chapter 9

TO HER PRAYERS for this intention, Sister Catherine added sacrifices of all sorts. Nothing was too hard or too much trouble to win the grace which she so ardently desired for all those living at Enghien: namely, that they should acquire a real love of the Blessed Virgin. Then one morning....

"Sister, old John is quite sick," the Superior announced. "He's had another spell. But he wants to talk to you."

Sister Catherine stared in amazement. Old John was one of the most obstinate of all the men living at Enghien. From the start

he had refused to have anything to do with the medal. Moreover, for years he had caused the Sisters great distress by his habit of using bad language and his refusal to go to the Sacraments. Now....

"John wants to see me, Mother? The cook?"

"Yes. You'd better go at once."

So Sister Catherine hurried off to the infirmary, where she found John tossing in a high fever. Any expectations that his request for her might mean a change of heart were quickly dashed. He was, in fact, more disagreeable than usual.

"Sister, everyone here is stupid and clumsy," he grumbled. "I'm not being looked after right. I want you to be my nurse."

Sister Catherine sat down by the bed. She was more than busy in the kitchen, but if there was something she could do for this poor fellow....

"All right, John," she said, smiling. "What would you like? Some water? Another pillow? Or

maybe your bed could be moved a little."

John grunted impatiently. "No, no. I just want you to tell me a story. And not any foolishness about saints or angels, either. I'm tired of hearing about them."

A pang shot through Sister Catherine's heart. Poor John! The Devil was trying so hard to win his soul. And barring a miracle, the struggle would be over without warning; John would die without the Sacraments.

"But I don't know any stories except holy ones, John. After all, they're really the best."

The old man's face grew hard. "Holy stories!" he muttered impatiently. "They're all right for children, Sister, but not for me. Tell me something interesting. About yourself, for instance."

"Myself?"

"Yes. Your family, your friends, where you were born, why you came here . . . anything!"

Sister Catherine's heart sank. She had no desire to talk about herself. Her one desire was to bring souls to a knowledge and a love of the Blessed Virgin. Still, she had prayed to win the confidence of everyone at Enghien in order to spread devotion to the Miraculous Medal. And perhaps if she satisfied John's childish whim. . . .

"All right. I'll tell you something about myself," she said, and with some reluctance launched into her story—beginning with the birth of Zoe Catherine Labouré, the ninth of eleven children, on May 2, 1806, at Fain-les-Moutiers, a village in the province of Burgundy.

"I grew up on my father's farm, John, and was very happy. But when I was nine years old, Mother died. Oh, what a blow that was! But then I decided to ask the Blessed Virgin to be my mother"

At once the sick man sat bolt upright. "Sister!" he roared. "Remember what I said? No holy stories!"

Sister Catherine had to smile, in spite of herself. "But wait, John! It's all part of what happened to me as a child. Don't you want to hear the rest of it?"

For a moment John glared. Then, slowly, he settled back on his pillow. "Well . . . all right," he muttered. "Go on."

"There was a statue of the Blessed Virgin in the kitchen. When I thought no one was looking, I climbed up on a chair and took it in my arms. 'Now you will be my mother,' I said. 'You will look after me.' And she did, John! From that very day!"

The sick man shut his eyes. "Humph!" he grunted. "I suppose the Blessed Virgin moved right into your father's house, and did the cooking and the washing and the mending!"

"No. But she did see to it that the neighbors should be very kind. And that Aunt Marguerite should take my little sister and me to live with her for the next two years. And when my big brothers left home to make their way in the world, she looked after them too."

Once again there was silence, and after a moment Sister Catherine saw fit to resume her story—relating countless little incidents that she thought might be of interest.

As was to be expected, John interrupted from time to time—especially when the story took a religious turn. Noting this, Sister Catherine briefly passed over the entrance into the Daughters of Charity of her older sister Marie Louise. But when it came time to tell of her own vocation

....

"John, when I was twelve years old I knew I wanted to be a religious. But my father wouldn't hear of it. Not even when I was eighteen years old would he allow me to leave for the convent. Then one night I had the strangest

dream. I seemed to be in church, assisting at the Mass of a kindly old priest. When all was over, he beckoned to me to come to him. But I was too frightened, and ran away. Later, I seemed to be at the house of a sick person, and there was the old priest again.

"'My child, it's a wonderful thing to care for the sick,' he told me. 'You avoid me just now, but a day will come when you will seek me out. God expects something from you. Don't forget that?'"

"Once again I was terrified, and ran away as fast as I could. Then—what do you think?"

There was no answer, and Sister Catherine leaned forward anxiously. But almost at once she relaxed. Wonder of wonders! John had fallen into a healthful sleep!

For a moment she looked at him, then took a Miraculous Medal from her pocket. Well she knew that it would never do to place it about his neck. When he awoke, he might be so angry that he would have a stroke. But surely there would be no harm in leaving it somewhere in the room... perhaps under the mattress....

"Dearest Mother, please help this poor man!" she begged silently. "Bring him to know and love you and your Son...soon!"

Chapter 10

LATE THAT afternoon Sister Catherine's kitchen duties were interrupted for a second time. After several hours of refreshing sleep, old John was awake and asking for her.

"He seems to be much better," said the Superior, eyeing Sister Catherine in a curious fashion. "Believe me, if you've done anything to help that troublesome old man...."

Sister Catherine smiled. "I didn't, Mother. But perhaps the Blessed Virgin has. Shall I go to him now?"

"Of course. Someone else can take over the work in the kitchen."

So Sister Catherine hurried off to the infirmary, where she found John waiting for her impatiently.

"Sister, I fell asleep during your story," he said. "Now—well, will you tell me the rest of it? Please?"

In spite of herself, Sister Catherine stared in amazement. Please! Why, old John was never known to use such a word! Moreover, the fever had left him, and he was looking remarkably well and untroubled. Could it really be possible that our Lady's medal....

Quickly she found a chair and sat down beside the bed. "Of

course I'll tell you the rest of the story," she said, smiling. "Just where were we?"

"At the part about the old priest in the dream, Sister. You were afraid of him, and ran away when he wanted to talk to you. But he said that some day you would seek him out."

"Yes. Well I was eighteen when I had that dream, John, and for a long time afterwards I used to wonder about it. 'Who is that old priest?' I would ask myself. 'And why can't I put his face out of my mind?'"

John's eyes were eager. "Well, who was he, Sister? Someone you knew?"

Sister Catherine shook her head. "No, John. He was a total stranger to me. But four years later, when I was twenty-two...."

"Yes?"

"My father arranged for me to leave home to visit my brother Charles and his wife Madeleine in Paris. They owned a restaurant, and Father thought that if I could work there as a waitress and meet some interesting people, I'd forget all about wanting to be a religious."

"But you didn't."

"No, I was miserable in Paris. And I was so shy and awkward that I made a wretched waitress. So, after a few months, it was de-

cided that I should leave the restaurant and go to school."

"School! When you were twenty-two years old?"

"Yes. You see, I hadn't been to school very much, living in the country, and I longed to be able to read and write well. Then, too, I felt that if I was a little smarter, it would be more likely that some convent would accept me."

Sister Catherine then went on to describe her life in Chatillon (a town not far from Paris), where her brother Hubert and his wife Jane had a boarding school for girls. Here she had stayed for nearly a year, doing her best to learn all she could and trying to adapt herself to her new circumstances. But it had been very hard. The girls at school were so much younger than herself—twelve and fourteen years old—and some of them were inclined

to look down on a young woman from the country who was so slow with books.

"I got so discouraged, John! Then one day Hubert's wife took me to visit the local hospital. It was run by the Daughters of Charity, and as we waited in the parlor for one of the Sisters to come...."

"Yes?"

"I noticed a certain picture on the wall. Oh, John! Guess what!"

"What, Sister?"

"It was the old priest of my dream! And he was St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Daughters of Charity! Then, as I looked at the picture, I heard those same strange words again: 'My child, you avoid me just now, but a day will come when you will seek me out. God expects something from you. Don't forget that.'"

(To be continued)



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On the eve of the Feast
March 6 of St. Thomas, the great
saint and learned philosopher, there took place the annual Philosopher's Meet. Each year on this occasion some topic of philosophy is carefully examined and scrutinized through the means of debate and discussion. This year's dissertation considered the "Necessity of Objective Truth." The novel manner of presentation added much interest to the program. The stage setting: a group of college students listening to their philosophy professor propounding his false views on 'objective truth'. Discussion between students and teacher followed. The fallacies in the professor's teaching were pointed out and refuted. The audience joined in the discussion.

After several months of
March 10 absence Father Walter, the Editor of THE GRAIL, returned to his Abbey home. There was much rejoicing at his arrival for it was at his door that death knocked but dared not enter. Father's illness had its effects, but his joyful and 'trickster' spirit had not diminished an iota. His duties as Director of the Secular Oblates and as Editor of this

publication make him a very busy monk, especially now in trying to make up for lost time.

** The members of the community listened attentively to the experiences of Father Gerhard Fittkau, the Executive Director of the American Branch of the St. Boniface Society. Father described his Russian captivity with much feeling and vividness. There were the cattle cars loaded with human beings, the trips of terror, the scarcity of food, lack of water, hours at a time of standing in one place without any support, crowded conditions: fifty or sixty people in one small room for several days, etc. This was a man who had gone through the inhuman and diabolical terrors of a Russian prison camp.

Another distinguished
March 15 person paid us a visit, the Most Rev. Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka, D.D., Titular Bishop of Thibia and Vicar Apostolic of Nasaka. One of the principal reasons for coming to St. Meinrad was to ask Father Abbot to send a group of monks to Africa for the purpose of establishing a College there. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) Father Abbot

was absent at the time. The Bishop dined with us at the noon meal then all assembled in the college gym to hear his short address. He is the only Negro bishop of the Latin Rite; was consecrated by Pope Pius XII in October of 1939. Some 185,000 Catholics with only fifty priests make up his diocese. At the wish of the present Holy Father, Bishop Kiwanuka is touring the United States to seek financial aid for his poor people.

All the sons of St. Patrick on March 16 rick proudly wended their way to the gym for the annual Eve of St. Patrick's Program. Here and there flashed ribbons of green on black cassocks. No red could be found even though many there were the sons of St. Boniface. The entertainment consisted of a short play, some musical numbers by the Seminary Orchestra and a finale: a brief movie entitled "Wings Over Ireland."

Although Lent brings March 20 with it penance, sack-cloth and ashes, a note of jubilation filled our hearts on this particular eve for on the morrow we would solemnly celebrate the feast of our founder, St. Benedict. Additional enjoyment came with the presentation of the Spring Concert on this same evening. Besides St. Benedict the program saluted the Spring as it arrived with its budding trees and blossoming bushes. Father Theophane directed the Abbey Symphony or-

chestra with the ease of a great master. Verdi's Grand March from "Aida," Themes from "Piano Concerto No. 2" by Rachmaninoff and "Marche Slave," a Tschaikowsky composition, were among the selections played by the Orchestra. A unique arrangement of "Holiday for Strings" by Father Theophane himself brought loud applause. A second part of the program featured the Glee Club, Choristers and Sixth Class Octet. Many of the numbers were personal arrangements of Father Theophane, director also of the choral group. An enumeration of a few of the songs: "Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho," "Look for the Silver Lining," "March of the Musketeers," and "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor" from "Miss Liberty."

When an F.B.I. man comes near your residence you have a feeling you must have done something wrong. That is not a correct view. The Federal Bureau of Investigation must be looked upon from a positive point of view. It tries to help and protect the unfortunate as well as investigate the less praiseworthy portion of humanity. To acquaint people with a more accurate idea of this department in our government a number of F.B.I. men are delivering lectures to as many schools throughout the country as possible. We ourselves were privileged to listen to Mr. B. Little, an F.B.I. man from Indianapolis. Among other things he informed

us of the various steps in the training of a man for this department. At the end of his discourse, Mr. Little answered the questions presented him. The speech was thoroughly enjoyed and received hearty applause.

Rev. Father Georges, O.P.,
April 1 in accord with his plan
for promoting Blessed
Martin de Porres' cause of can-
onization delivered an interesting
lecture on this topic. After relating
Blessed Martin's life, Father Georges
spoke of the origin and progress
of the movement now on foot for
the canonization of the holy man.
The last twenty-five minutes were
spent in showing some slides of
century-old works of art.

Mr. E. K. Dowling, the
April 2 father of one of our stu-
dents, recently returned
from a two weeks' stay in Soviet
Russia—in Moscow itself. His ex-
periences and knowledge gathered
while behind the iron curtain were
the subject matter of a very inter-
esting talk given to us in the even-
ing. Mr. Dowling had gone to Rus-
sia on a business visa. While in
Moscow he noted these points of
interest: everything we say of God
the Russians say of Stalin; there
were great numbers of German
prisoners to be seen; around the

city of Moscow there were innu-
merable slum districts; very few
automobiles; majority of the people
lived on black bread, tea, and cab-
bage; old type electric light bulbs
used; no modern conveniences;
churches have been changed into
movie houses or museums. These
were but a few of the high lights
that the speaker mentioned.

March being "vocation
Vocation month" Father Gerard
Month and Father Jude visited
many schools of the surround-
ing neighborhood to deliver lectures
on vocations. Literature in the
form of pamphlets and leaflets were
distributed to each pupil. A ques-
tion period followed each lecture
during which time the Fathers an-
swered questions that arose in the
minds of the young thinkers. "In-
teresting questions" was the com-
ment of one Father.

Also during vocation month: the
Minor Seminarians made a daily
pilgrimage to St. Joseph Shrine, the
intention being "for an increase of
religious and Catholic professional
vocations." Each day a different
group of eight students hiked over
to the shrine.

April 29 Father Meinrad leaves
on the Queen Elizabeth
with members of the pilgrimage.

Nicholas Schmidt, O.S.B.

ABBEY NEWSMONTH SUPPLEMENT

So many of our friends have asked about our new building, St. Bede's Hall, that we thought a brief report of its history and present status would be of interest.

THREE YEARS have elapsed since the first concrete was poured into the bomblike craters of "bakery hill." Those were the footings of our new building, St. Bede's Hall. For those acquainted with the surrounding terrain we might add that this building is located about thirty feet just south of the present Minor Seminary on the lower part of the hill atop of which stand the Bakery and the Water Tower. When completed, St. Bede's Hall will overlook the lake and the students' ball field. Already one may view the whole country side even as far as

Ferdinand from the top of the steel skeleton structure. The new building will be two stories higher than the present group of buildings.

The history behind this new undertaking is brief. Our school enrollment had become so large that additional dormitory and classroom space became imperative. Then too, there had been a long felt need of better facilities for our science and musical departments. Another problem was the Minor Seminary gym—too often it had to be used for play performances causing long "no basketball" intervals. Thus the plan gradually took shape: there would be dormitories, science rooms, music rooms and... an auditorium. Our architect, Mr. Edward Schulte, and a construction engineer, Mr. Walter Manion, both of Cincinnati, were called upon to design the new building. Soon the

St. Bede's Hall
the architect's
drawing





August 1947
from bomb-like craters

sets of blueprints lay on Father Abbot's desk.

Our building manager, Father Peter, was assigned to supervising the new construction. After thorough study of the detailed prints, he began the task of finding workmen and locating building materials. The south side soon heard the loud noise of bulldozer and power shovel as their large jaws dug deep into the earth.

The foundation was gradually completed. The large steel columns and huge trusses were laboriously lifted into their designated positions. Then came the long days—full days—of pouring concrete columns and large areas of floor space. In the meantime the walls climbed above the surface to rise higher and higher as the steel construction grew. Sandstone backed up with cement blocks made up the wall structure. The stone itself comes from our sandstone quarry several miles north of the Abbey.

At the time of the present writing the skeleton of the building is nearing completion and the reinforced steel and tile roof is being erected.

St. Bede's Hall will contain over one million cubic feet of space. The auditorium is located on the ground floor with its ceiling and steel superstructure reaching to the second floor of the west-east wing. A stage, small orchestra pit, and movie booths are included in this large auditorium which will have a capacity of 740 persons.

Since the auditorium takes in part of the first floor the remaining area is not too large. Still, there is space for a music lecture room, music library, and ten soundproof practice rooms.

The science department is located on the second story. This consists



October 1948
Abbot Ignatius lays the cornerstone

of biology, physics, chemistry and agricultural class rooms. Laboratories, work rooms, a darkroom, greenhouse, and a specially designed visual-education room are also on this floor.

The next floor includes four dormitories, wash rooms, a recreation room, two study halls and several other small apartments.

Fourth floor: Speech Correction room, recording department, acoustically designed studio with its separate control room. On the east side is the art studio and workshop.

The top floor—5th—is the astronomy section. A door leads to the outside onto a walk ten foot wide with balustrade.

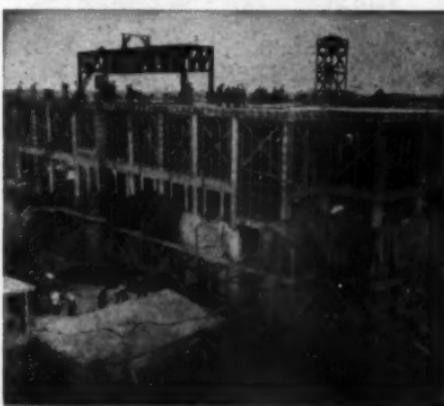
At the present writing we are still far from having a completed building. Our construction company—consisting of Father Peter and local labor—are as busy as ever. If progress has been retarded at all it has been because of insufficient funds. At the very outset of the venture Father Abbot made it clear that we would "pay for it as we build." This has forced us to go slowly. Looking back over the past three years, however, we cannot but give thanks for the many generous offerings that have come in from our good friends. It is by means of these contributions that St. Bede's Hall has at least progressed as far as it has today.

By September there is every reason to believe that the wing running north-south will be ready for use as class rooms for the next school year. The rest of the building will be completed gradually.



September 1948

steel structure begins to rise



September 1949

craning for a high "pour"

This space is for the picture of the completed building. Frankly, we do need help to complete it.

In the ancient abbey of Maria Einsiedeln in Switzerland there died in 1925 a Benedictine monk, Brother Meinrad Eugster, highly respected by his confreres for his virtuous life. His cause for beatification has been introduced at Rome, and *The Grail* has been chosen for bringing his cause to the knowledge of American Catholics. The publication of favors obtained through the intercession of Brother Meinrad will serve to advance the cause of the saintly laybrother. Accordingly our readers who experience the help of Brother Meinrad's intercession are asked to notify us of the facts by writing to *The Grail Office, St. Meinrad, Indiana*. *The Grail* will select outstanding favors for publication. A picture of Brother Meinrad and a prayer for his canonization may be obtained by sending a stamped and self-addressed envelope to *The Grail Office*.

The Servant of God, Brother Meinrad



MONTHLY NOVENA-15th to 23rd

All who wish their petitions or intentions prayed for through the intercession of the Servant of God, Brother Meinrad, O.S.B., please send them in to THE GRAIL Office, St. Meinrad, Indiana before the 15th of the month. A Novena of Masses is offered each month for the glorification and canonization of Brother Meinrad and for all intentions sent in.

Ten years ago polio attacked my son leaving him with a helpless arm. Last summer I began praying to Brother Meinrad that something could be done. Not long after that an operation was performed and the use of the arm regained. Sincerest thanks to Brother Meinrad for this great favor! Mrs. J.C.K.Pa.

I promised Brother Meinrad that if he would help me through my eighth child birth without a hemorrhage I would write and tell you. My request was granted. Mrs. J.B.K., Mo.

Please offer a Mass in thanksgiving to Our Blessed Mother and Brother Meinrad for obtaining the recovery of a little girl who had a brain concussion caused by a fall.

Mrs. R.L.P., Ore.

Enclosed is a small offering in thanksgiving to Brother Meinrad for granting a special favor that I asked for my mother. H.M.W., W. Va.

Please publish my thanks for favours received through the intercession of Brother Meinrad.

Mrs. J.T.D., Calif.

SPIRITUAL BOOK SELECTION



*You can double your joys
and cut your sorrows in half
if you learn to*

Live in the Present

WE HUMAN BEINGS are strange creatures. We are forever crying for the moon, and neglect the solid earth on which we stand. We make nothing of that which is in our hands; our eyes are forever wandering abroad, seeing phantoms through the mist, turning life into a nightmare, paralyzing action by the fear of that which is not. We have the present always with us; yet we are always endeavouring to live in a half-forgotten past or a fancied future. We live in the past, recalling pleasures that are no more, magnifying them out of all proportion, contrasting with them in their magnified state the trifling pleasures of today, and by the contrast robbing these pleasures of their meaning. Or again we look along the past, and count up the mistakes we have made. We tell ourselves of all the opportunities we have lost; our old self scolds our juvenile self for all the foolish things it has done; we weep over all

that is past and gone; even when we smile at happy recollections it is with the smile that lingers round the mouth of a corpse. And the result of each and all is the same. We look at the present with a long and sour face. We say that we have spoiled ourselves, or that our chance is over and will not return, or that evidently we are doomed to disappointment; and beneath this self-accumulated burden we just sit down and do nothing.

Or else we live in the future. We are something at present, but it is nothing in comparison with what we may yet hope to be; we can do something today, but compared with what we might do or yet may do, or but for this or that interference would do, it is not worth consideration. We peer into the darkness to discover that which we can never know. We

Selected from The School of Love by Archbishop Goodier, S.J. A Grell Publication, \$1.50

imagine strange things which we know very well may never come to pass. We look down imaginary vistas, build our castles in the air, and fret because we are not permitted to live in them. Or last of all, as a last perversion, if for the moment all is going well with us, we deliberately spoil the content we might enjoy by dwelling on the time when we shall be no longer happy, or even, if we are extreme, by making ourselves miserable because we are not so.

Obviously in neither of these ways do we benefit ourselves or others, or promote our good or happiness; by both we only wreck ourselves in the present, so far as we are able. Looking backward has many dangers. In the first place we easily magnify the things that are gone. We forget that in the past we were younger; and the younger we were, the greater do small things appear. Who has not experienced the sense of disappointment which often comes to one who returns to a spot after a long lapse of years? In his childhood he has been in some room or building; he has retained the memory of his visit; in his manhood he visits the spot again, and is oppressed with a sense of its narrowness, its puny size. So it is with much that is past. We retain the recollection, but we forget that we have grown; if time could go backwards, and put us again in the circumstances after which we hanker, how narrow they would seem! How great would be our disappointment!

If this is true of past delights how

much more is it true of past miseries! Of all delusions perhaps none is so great as the thought that our past has ruined our present, that evils we have done, the mistakes we have committed, have made all further hope impossible. Again, for the most part, looking into the past we repeat the mistake of the magnified room. "When I was a child," says St. Paul, "I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of a child." So we, when we were children, may indeed have done evil as children; but let us remember it was "as children," and not as mature men and women. And so of every step after; we are always older than we were, always more mature than we were, and the resolve now, if only we will make it, is the act of a more matured creature than the evil we did yesterday. No matter who we are, if we will, it is always in our power to restore the balance.

In the same way dreaming of the future, of what might be and what may be has at least three paralyzing effects. It requires no great imagination to picture to ourselves some state or condition better than that which is now ours. If only this obstacle were removed, if that arrangement were made, if we ourselves were placed in such or such surroundings, how happy we should be! How much good we should be able to do! And we compare our lot with this mirage of our own making; we lose sight of the opportunities that

are actually around us; we forget how much worse is the lot of many others; we ignore how little we deserve even that which is ours; we are depressed at what we have not, neglecting that which we have; our strength is enfeebled our activity grows slack; we have chosen to live in dreamland, and we reap a dreamer's harvest.

Or there is the other side, the dwelling on imaginary fears. If we are inclined to magnify the pleasures that are past, no less do we magnify the troubles that may be before us. It is a common saying that pain in prospect is greater pain than pain which actually is upon us; or to put it in another way, it is not so much pain, as the prospect of its long continuance that will break a man down. So it is in most things else. If only this will not happen, we shall be happy and content! We have no reason to suppose that it will; but we must worry ourselves with this shadow. If we lose this friend we lose everything; if we lose this situation we are doomed; if this thing goes wrong the rest is hopeless; with these and a thousand other "ifs" we shatter our moral nerve, we take the heart out of our life's work, and render ourselves very puny things indeed.

Meanwhile the present alone is ours, and we are letting it slip

through our fingers. The past is gone, whether for evil or for good, to be stored up in better hands than ours. The future still belongs to God alone; and it is not the least of His wonderful mercies that He keeps it entirely to Himself. It is what I am now, not what I have been or shall be; what I do now, not what I have done or shall do; that here and now matters most, to me and to God, and to all the world besides. Those who face that which is actually before them, unburdened by the past, undistracted by the future, these are they who live, who make the best of their lives; these are those who have found the secret of contentment. For such there is no day but it can be lived through, no matter what it may bring; there is no circumstance but it can be put to the best advantage, no matter how contrary and galling. "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation," cried out St. Paul; and he pushed on from day to day, saying every morning with the Psalmist: "Now I have begun," until he discovered that his many beginnings had enabled him to fight the good fight and to complete his course. To be ready for each day's duty as it comes, that will make us ready, when it comes, for the duty of the last day of all.

■ ■ ■ "To worship ourselves is to worship nothing. And the worship of nothing is hell."

—Thomas Merton

by Hilary Ottensmeyer, O.S.B.

THE ASCENSION: OUR JOY IN A NEW LIFE

THREE IS A HILL just outside of the city of Jerusalem, across the Cedron valley, called Olivet. We know it well. Here Jesus used to bring His disciples, to separate them from the immense vulgarity of the life of the city. Once upon its slopes, He would talk freely, intimately, as He liked to talk to His friends. Olivet's was that garden which saw the bloody sweat, the arrest, the beginning of the way of the cross. And after the great crescendo of the Passion and Resurrection, forty days after the Savior had brought forth His body from the dark womb of the earth, He returned to the Mount of Olives once more.

It was late in the spring of the year, when the Judean hills were first giving promise of harvest, before the heavy heat of summer could bed down the land to inactivity. Jesus led his friends out of the Holy City, up the slope of the hill, to the peak which overlooked all of Jerusalem. A few final words of instruction He gave them, then, even more quietly than He had begun His life on earth at Bethlehem, He rose up into the skies and was soon lost to the gaze of their upturned eyes.

There must have been something of the wrench of parting in the hearts of all. The sight of that wound-pierced body meant happiness to all of them. But yet, St. Luke

found reason to say that the Apostles "returned to Jerusalem with great joy" as a result of that momentous leave-taking.

Pertinent to this joy and its explanation are a few fragments from history which furnish a bit more light. There is a happy legend left us from long centuries back. St. Augustine wrote of it, gave credence to it; so also did St. Paulinus and the historian Sulpicius Severus. It is said that when Jesus ascended from the summit of Olivet, He left His footprints there on the rocky peak. Later, in the fourth century, St. Helena, treasure-hunting in the Holy Land for signs of Christ's earthly presence, had a great church built on this spot. The saintly empress had the basilica so planned that the center of the building wherein were the impressions of Christ's footsteps, stood open to the sky, unroofed. Thus the original passage way of the ascension was left free.



That Single Word—Joy

The two events point up a very sound, healthy attitude toward the happenings of that first Ascension day, an attitude St. Luke means to convey by that single word "joy." The circular open space in the roof of the lofty basilica of St. Helena is a huge eye staring up to heaven, earth's eye intently looking after a Redeemer *Who departed in great triumph*. Those footprints, the last visible marks of the God-Man's having lived among mere men are pledges of a new invisible manner in which Christ would stand among His disciples. St. Leo The Great pointed

out the heart of the reason when he wrote:

"Never, then, was Jesus so well known, as when he withdrew himself into the glory of his Father's majesty, and became more present by his Divinity in proportion as he was distant in his Humanity. Then did Faith, made keener, approach to the Son co-equal with his Father; she needed not the handling of the bodily substance of her Christ.... Our Faith was to be of so generous a kind, as that we were to go to the Co-equal Son, not by a corporal feeling, but by a spiritual understanding."

What brought joy and faith to the Apostles was their newfound manner of focusing their lives through the light of the Ascension. They side-stepped the error of looking upon our Lord's newly-completed life as a detached example, something set aside, a kind of masterpiece of religious art. Our Lord's life was not lived on the principle of the cook book, or the dress pattern—keep to the exact measurements and you are bound to come out with the perfect product. In the final, successful completion of His life, the Apostles knew they had found the solution to the crises of their own lives. Told to imitate Him, to live in His love, told that He would be among them "unto the consummation of the world," they had only caught the full significance of how this was to come

about when they saw Him rising above them in the clouds. Imitation of Christ was to them not the exterior mimicry of Christ's actions. It was allowing this new glorified life of Christ, which was theirs already, but at Pentecost would be even more richly theirs, to come out more fully from the interior of their own lives. Union with Christ was not a *hand-in-Hand* affair, but a blending of lives into this One Triumphant Life. They knew now that the very flesh which had been cursed in the person of Adam, now sat at the right hand of God in the Person of Christ. And they were united to that ascended Christ! "Even when we were dead in sins, (God) brought us to life together with Christ, and raised us up together, and seated us together in heaven in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 1, 5-7)

If we could be convinced of this glorification of our human flesh through His triumph, ours also would be that Ascension joy. St. Leo puts this unbelievable exploit of Christ very clearly. He says:

"Christ's Ascension is also our own; upon the glory of the Head rests the hope of the (Mystical) body. On this holy day we have received not only the assurance of entering into the possession of eternal glory, but we have already entered into the height of heaven with Christ Jesus."

To feel you are a part of such a closely knit, grandly climaxed plan is exhilarating and humbling. You do not much feel like preening your feathers after St. Thomas puts the

humbling side of it this way: "Christ is the total wealth of the Church; He Himself, with the other elect, is not greater than He Himself alone." But who would not want to be caught up, absorbed into this great plan of the God Who has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing on high in Christ"?

Liturgy orchestrates life

With this Ascension slant on religion, a man's way of thinking would pull him out of the narrow, cramped, God-and-me-alone way of looking at becoming a saint. Francois Mauriac speaks of how "the liturgy orchestrates life," gives it a sweeping unity, progression like a beautiful melody. Once fully understanding this, we would not be tempted to sit in the corner of our minds, furtively munching devotional crumbs, afraid to be caught at it and called "pious."

There is something unhealthy about the secretive, the hidden, even in religious matters. A man off by himself is apt to lose his balance. That is why Christ founded a church which was to be a visible society. The lonely religionist ends up by fashioning a little religious world right inside the Church. Failing to catch the grand scope of Christ's life as it is lived over again year by year through these feasts, he plans out a private liturgy of feasts and fasts, handmade, and so comfortable.

But what can so grip, so transform by its piercing reality as the

great truth that envelopes the soul on this Ascension day? On Ascension day we can praise God for having given the Redeemer a just glorification in heaven, one so richly merited by a life of love, obedience, and suffering. Then, the sublime promise of the One ascended is preferred on this day: "It is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16, 7-8) Thus we are reminded that in ten days from Christ's ascent from Olivet the Holy Spirit Who renews in us the adoption of sons of God will come. Then, here is the great consolation of the feast: "Let not your hearts be troubled...because I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14, 1-2) Finally, there is St. Paul's magnificent vision of the ascended Christ standing as the new High Priest before the heavenly throne, "always living to make intercession for us."

(Heb. 7, 25) Certainly, joy is the keynote of the day.

There is a very expressive little ceremony added to the High Mass on Ascension day. The deacon solemnly reads the Gospel which briefly and effectively recounts the episode of Christ's departure from Mount Olivet. Then the deacon takes an extinguisher and goes over to the Gospel side of the altar to snuff out the Paschal Candle for the last time this year. This beautiful candle has been symbolic of Christ's brief presence on earth after His Resurrection. One inclines at the time to indulge in a nostalgic sigh, a surreptitious tear. But instead of catering to such sentimentality, the celebrant immediately intones the great act of faith, the *Credo*, and to the thunder of its music the feast goes on with unabated joy, continuing its acclamations of triumph—God is ascended! Alleluia!





by Vicki Lester

A BLEAK PERIOD of boredom accompanied by intermittent stabs of homesickness...such was Sunday in camp when off duty. I was a WAAF in the Royal Air Force thousands of miles from home and feeling very sorry for myself. Then one Sunday my buddy, Jean, took me along to 'Mom' Robertson's house.

'Mom', as the girls affectionately called her, lived several miles from camp in a respectable residential district. Her large house, like many houses in those days, looked like a middle-aged woman's morning face, unpainted and tired. When we reached the front door Jean didn't use the brass knocker (there was no door bell). She just walked in as though she had lived there all of her life, and I trailed after her. There was no one in the front of the house; in fact, the parlor and front hall had the look of not being lived in very much. We could hear

There are some who take all they can get from others, and then there are folks like 'Mom' Robertson who hold open house all their life.

MOM'S OPEN HOUSE

a couple of voices in the back trying to drown out a strident opera singer on the radio. We headed for the voices, and through a swinging door entered a room which bewildered me; it was like nothing I had ever seen. It seemed to be a combination barnyard, parlor and kitchen.

The first thing I saw were the chickens roosting on the unoccupied chairs, or wandering around the room looking for corn. While I was trying to escape the attentions of a yapping little dog I noticed 'Mom' for the first time. She appeared like a huge air liner out of the fog of steam near the fireplace, pushed the dog aside with her foot and enveloped Jean and me in her arms. She kissed us both and said to me with a broad smile of welcome: "I'm so glad Jean brought you; here let me take your coat, and do sit down,"

as she brushed a clucking hen off of a chair. At the same time she wagged a finger at a ten-year old boy.

"Now, John," she cried so as to be heard above the radio, "I don't want to tell you again to go wash your neck." This refrain came into every lull in the conversation for the next hour until John slowly shuffled off toward the sink and began to scrub his neck.

How well I remember the coziness of the large open fireplace and how good it felt to toast my cold feet near the logs. The room seemed to fill up like a railroad station at train time. I didn't know where they all came from. Conversation drowned out the radio, and cigarette smoke drifted overhead like artillery smoke after a battle. I sat so near the fireplace that I was in constant danger of being hit by cigarette butts as they whizzed past me into the grate. It was like being on the firing range. But who was I, uninvited as I was, to raise a protest.

Meanwhile the dog pursued his favorite pastime which was jumping up at the net curtains which were just beyond his reach. The hens were chased out of the kitchen several times, but always seemed to find their way back again.

It wasn't long before 'Mom' had a steaming cup of hot tea for us. All the time she was getting it ready she was telling us what a shame it was that all of us children had to be so far away from home. She had three boys overseas. One of them

had just lost his left hand and was coming home soon.

"Not that I complain any," she said with a sigh, "as long as they come home. And I want you all to feel free to come here and bring your friends just whenever you can get away from camp. You know how welcome you all are to whatever I have."

Just then the dog did catch the curtain and there was a loud tearing sound; but 'Mom' merely got a pair of scissors and cut the cloth even again while the dog went on with his old game of trying to catch the curtain. There was never any excitement or fuss.

Later there were footsteps overhead, and presently two American airmen came downstairs and greeted 'Mom' with a kiss, saying to her: "Gee, Mom, that was the best night's rest we had in a long time." We said hello all around and got to talking. The airmen were on a pass, and said that whenever they could get any time off they always stayed with 'Mom'.

At the fireplace 'Mom' was frying ham for breakfast, a never-ending meal at her house. The boys said how good she was to them, and that she even found time to write to their wives back home and assure them that their husbands were just fine. 'Mom' had pictures all over the house . . . pictures of American, Polish, French and Norwegian children and their mammas. Mom's kitchen was like United Nations' headquarters . . . only I'm sure there was more

love between folks at Mom's house.

The service men and women who came were welcome to a meal, or a bed or a loan of money if they were broke. A few came just to talk things over, or get a little motherly advice. She had time, and enough love for everyone. I asked 'Mom' once, when I knew her better, if any of her loans had gone unpaid and she said none ever were unpaid. I could see why. It would have been like cheating one's own mother.

Everyone had breakfast that morning. That is where the silly old hens came in useful with eggs being rationed. After a while the old kitchen grew on one and the hens and the crazy dog and the dust mattered less and less to the lonely men and women who felt the warm and loving kindness that was as tangible in 'Mom's' house as the stale smell of bacon and eggs and the cheerful

laughter of happy people.

When we slept at 'Mom's' house we could cook, wash dishes and make beds, but other than that we were told to relax and make ourselves at home. I found out too how 'Mom' managed so many extra meals; whenever any of us got anything extra from home—the first thing we thought of was "take it to Mom's and share it with the others."

I wonder if 'Mom' ever knew how much happiness she gave to her 'children' and how much they loved her. I met my future husband at 'Mom's' house, and how happy 'Mom' was for both of us. And my buddy, Jean...she married 'Mom's' son, the boy with the left hand gone. They too are very happy. I know that there are some who try to get all they can out of others...and then there are people like 'Mom' who hold open house all their life.

THE TRUTH HURTS

The story is told of Il Duce, Mussolini himself, at the climax of his political career, successfully enjoying a movie incognito.

In the midst of a newsreel a portrait of himself in heroic pose was thrown on the screen. The spectators, of course, all rose, cheering wildly, that is, all save Mussolini, who sat through the demonstration fidgeting.

This had been obviously a touchy point: whether to stand up and risk being recognized honoring himself, or to remain modestly seated. But after the excitement was over, an old Italian lady who had the seat next to him leaned over and said: "Signor, that's how we all feel, but it's safer to stand up."

—Our Sunday Visitor

How many of those who criticize
the Communist slave state know what
true Government ought to be?

GOVERNMENT AS IT SHOULD BE

by H. C. McGinnis

THE TRUE TYPE of state is one which finds its origin in the natural law. Its existence does not depend upon contracts made among men. Its growth is as natural as the growth of a human being into adulthood. Just as the human adult was once an infant, so has the state had its infancy. In the infant stage it is the family.

History tells us that the original and basic social unit is the family. Before long, families found themselves associating with other families to form a community of families. This association was in response to man's instinct and reason. Man is born a social being, hence his instinct impels him to seek association with others. In addition, man's reason told him that each family would gain immeasurably should it associate itself with other families for a mutual interchange of goods and services. These formations of communities of families did not result from the bright ideas of certain individuals here and there. They are

seen throughout all history, regardless of time and place, showing that men everywhere were moved by a common impulse in this respect. Man merely followed the dictates of his nature.

A NATION GROWS

Still using the historical approach, we find communities of families associating themselves for the purpose of forming tribes or confederations of communities. Such moves were always made for the further good of the families involved. We also find tribes uniting in a like manner to form nation-states. The nation-state afforded a greater security and prosperity for the families which composed it. Under its protecting wings family life carried out its pattern and its destiny. The Old Testament account of the growth of the Hebrew nation from the family pattern affords us a clear historical picture which is easily available. In this picture we find the national life of the Hebrew state marching steadily on

H. C. McGinnis teaches at Duquesne University. His current series on the true and false theories of government are the result of his conviction that in these critical times it is more important for Americans to know the ideas behind the world struggle than to know about the latest atrocities committed behind the Iron Curtain.

through the everyday life of the families which composed it. The nation's life was lived at the family level.

For example, when the prophet Samuel was told by God to anoint Saul for the purpose of having him become Israel's first king, the prophet found Saul, a mature man, living with the family group headed by his father. Throughout the entire Old Testament we find the Israelites living in family groups of the patriarchal type, with these families organized into tribes which constituted the twelve tribes of the nation. The history of other peoples reveals strikingly similar accounts of the association of families into larger social units until the formation of the nation was reached.

Open-minded and clear-thinking persons find it very obvious from history, if nothing else, that the state is a natural pattern. It is the out-growth of that part of the natural law which concerns the political or social order. Since this fact is undeniably true, then the state and its pattern of behavior stem from the mind of the Creator, the Author of nature. This being true, the nation-

state, which must remain the largest social grouping until a family of nations is established, is morally obliged to follow the purposes established for it by the Creator and man's nature. These purposes are concerned with the promotion of the welfare of the families which compose the national community. The state is not intended to be an imperialism operated for the benefit of a relatively few individuals. Neither does it have industrialism or commercialism for its primary purpose. It is basically a social unit existing for the welfare of that segment of humanity which composes it.

NOT A MERE CONTRACT

Because of the widespread acceptance of the Contractualist theory concerning the state's origin, nature and purposes, few modern states function in accordance with their true nature. In one respect, states resemble individuals. No individual can achieve a successful life when his actions run contrary to the dictates of his nature. Neither can a state serve its true function and achieve the destiny intended for it when it ignores its nature and its natural purposes. The state which recognizes its true nature is not concerned with totalitarianism or individualism. It can not possibly be concerned with totalitarianism, since that form of society subordinates everything to the state, thus making the state man's chief end. The totalitarian state holds that man exists entirely for the state. As a result,

the interests of the families involved are subordinated to the whims and objectives of the state's government.

On the other hand, the state which recognizes its true nature is not interested in the promotion of individualism and individualistic patterns. It knows that it is a social organism, operating much like the family pattern except that its activities are more comprehensive. Under individualism certain individuals or groups of individuals seek to exploit for their own selfish purposes the other social units which compose the national body. Under the natural type of society, the state exists for the purposes of providing a wider interchange among families of goods and services, always mutually beneficial, than smaller units can possibly do.

To understand the true nature of the state, one should analyse the nature and purposes of the family. The true state is only an extended family pattern, with its relationship to the family's individuals less immediate and less intimate than the relationship of the family itself. It is not logical to admit in one breath that the family is a true organic structure and then deny in the next that the state, a huge family of families, is something totally different. The family and the state are both social units, the difference being largely in size. Nature has planned social units of different scopes and sizes with many purposes in common. Their chief common purpose is to serve the welfare of man. Since the indi-

vidual person begins his life through the family pattern and is prepared for his temporal existence within the family's bosom, it is logical then that social units larger than the family promote man's welfare best when they promote the interests of the family.

The vast majority of the evils which now bedevil modern society would be eliminated very quickly should modern society accept and practice the state's true nature. World wars of catastrophic proportions would not be waged on the assumption that their bloody destruction would be of advantage to the welfare of the families in the involved nations.

FRUITS OF TRUTH

Wars conducted to advance imperialism and colonial expansion, which in reality are waged to benefit certain industrial and commercial groups, would not be tolerated if the welfare of the nation's families were given first consideration. In fact, if Western civilization were to accept the state's true nature, war would be virtually non-existent. States would strive earnestly to keep their external and internal affairs in the best possible order, so that the families residing under the national tent could pursue their purposes in an uninterrupted manner.

Distributive justice would be very much in evidence. A nation's produced wealth, produced jointly by the labor of the nation's families,

would be distributed in a manner which would better serve the needs of families. The fathers of families would be considered as having a social value in addition to their productive value. Production would be pointed to better serving the needs of families rather than to excessive profit-taking by a relatively few individuals. Underprivileged families, now victims of the profit-making motif gone berserk, would gradually lessen in numbers as the nation's economic life would aim at the good of the entire community.

The pattern of education would take on an entirely different complexion. Educators, realizing that when the child goes to school his teacher stands in the place of his parents, would cause education's patterns to conform to the ideals and purposes pursued by the moral-minded parents in home training. Public education would be as interested in the moral training of the young as parents are. It would include the formational aspect of education, education's guiding principle from its earliest days until rather recently.

The natural state has a deep and highly activated interest in the preservation of public morality. A high pattern of public morality is a tremendous asset to parents in the rearing of the young, yet they can do little about it directly. The control of public morality lies beyond the proper scope of the parent and hence must rest in a unit higher than the family. While parents can put pressure upon public authorities, they

frequently are not too successful. Modern states often hold that many aspects of public morality are not properly the concern of public officials. This attitude is the logical outcome of the laissez-faire concept of society. The doctrine of laissez-faire, while originally confined to economic phases of society, has now crept into the pattern of social behavior. The natural type state admits that one of its primary purposes is the keeping of public morals in a state which is conducive to the proper rearing of children.

The natural-type civil order is also considerably concerned in public health matters. Proper parents are always interested in the good health of their children, yet they must often stand helpless. Community health, checking epidemics, and general preventive health measures are beyond the scope of the family. Their operation lies within the province of the civil authorities. Where an economic insufficiency prevents parents from maintaining proper health levels in their families, the natural state, within the limits of its income, makes provision to afford the necessary medical attention which impoverished parents are unable to pay for. However, this does not mean that it operates "stateized" medicine.

CHRISTIANS NEED TO KNOW

The natural type of the civil order is the one discussed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclicals on the civil order. It is the type with which

Pope Pius XI was concerned in his social encyclicals. The present Holy Father has extolled its virtues many times, particularly in his Christmas Messages of 1942 and 1944. Today's world is the scene of a fierce ideological struggle. Unfortunately for society's future well-being, the two chief contestants both represent erroneous social philosophies. A victory by either side will not set the world on the track to future happiness. With this futile struggle threatening to destroy the very fabric of civilization, it is not only extremely odd, but also totally inexcusable, that Christian people fail to acquaint themselves with the characteristics of the type of society which stems from nature.

Surely no one can properly claim that there is a dearth of information on the subject. Rather there is an extreme dearth of proper interest. The encyclicals of Leo XII on CIVIL GOVERNMENT, THE CHRISTIAN CONSTITUTION OF STATES, HUMAN LIBERTY, THE CHIEF DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN, and CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY give all necessary details concerning the origin, nature and purposes of the natural state. Of this we may be absolutely sure: since the natural order of society stems from the mind of the Creator, the term *Christian civilization* will be nothing more than a misnomer until our society accords with the natural pattern erected by God.

■ Mass Movement

One day in chapel King Louis XIV was astounded to note that only a handful of people were present instead of the huge congregation that ordinarily attended. Moreover, the people seemed completely absorbed in their prayers and unaware of the King's presence.

The King remarked upon these facts to Fénelon, his chaplain. "Ah, sire," replied the old priest, "I think I can explain fully."

"Please do," said the King.

"Well, Your Majesty, I made the announcement this morning that you did not plan to attend chapel today. I thought you might be interested in learning which of your subjects come to worship God, and which ones to flatter the King."

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Love casts out fear



Security is not necessary for married happiness—but Susan did not learn this until it was almost too late.

by Angela Stevens

THE way it looked to Susan Perry, a problem was only half solved if the answer brought no peace of mind.

And Susan, standing tall and slim and looking down into the twilight from the window of her second-story bedroom, felt no peace. She felt only fear—fear of the future. Fear for the baby that was coming. Fear that Jeff, her boyish young husband, would not take his new job seriously—that they would again find themselves without food and shelter.

Susan wanted, more than anything on earth, to lose fear. There was a warm feeling about her heart when she thought of Jeff, with his twinkling brown eyes and quick laughter, but she was remembering too how Jeff had always thought of life as a big

pretty ball to be taken out of his pocket and played with.

Jeff had a job in Charleston now. He'd even had a small raise. He'd found an apartment, and had written and telephoned her repeatedly asking her to come. She'd promised to go to him—maybe in a week or two. She should be joyous, she told herself. Yet here she was afraid to go—terribly afraid.

Susan looked around the big room in her father's house. It held a four-poster bed and a marble-topped dresser. It meant security. It was perfect. *Perfect?* Maybe that wasn't such a good word after all. Maybe she'd asked too much of her marriage to Jeff. Maybe a married life couldn't be perfect.

But Susan knew she couldn't think of her own fears now. She

had to think of her sister, Louise—Louise and Tommy Brooks. In a few minutes they would be married in St. Theresa's.

Susan slipped on the periwinkle crepe dress that she would wear as Louise's matron of honor. She rearranged her soft blond waves. She thought how thin her face had grown in these two months that Jeff had been gone. She glanced out of the window into the twilight. Only a short distance away she could see the spire of St. Theresa's with its white cross on top. A pang shot through her. Had it been just two years since she and Jeff had walked out of the church?

"We're married, Honey," Jeff had whispered. "Forever—and ever."

Two years. It had seemed much longer.

The grandfather clock in the hall struck seven. Susan hurried across the hall and knocked on Louise's bedroom door.

Susan found Louise standing in front of the mirror wearing her long white satin wedding gown. Her hair fell like burnished copper from under her wedding veil, and her neck was soft and white like the satin itself. She was fine and sweet, Susan thought affectionately, and yet she was going into such uncertainty. — into marriage—

Louise turned to Susan. The smile faded from her face.

"Susan!" she exclaimed. "You look—scared."

Susan stopped twiddling with her gloves, but she couldn't make herself smile.

"I am—scared for you," she said. "Marriage is such a risk."

Louise drew herself up to her full height. She adjusted her filmy white veil before she spoke. Then she said firmly, "I'll take the risk. And anyway—I don't believe it's marriage that fails. It's people. As for Tommy and me—well, I shan't think we've failed if we hit a bump."

Susan swallowed hard. *A bump.* Was that what it was with Jeff and her—"a bump"?

For an instant, Susan felt better. Then she remembered the night Jeff had run angrily out at the door—that last night she had seen him. And her fears came back.

"Time to go to the church!"

Susan and Louise heard their father's voice floating up the stairs. They turned and left the room. Louise's eyes sparkled in happiness, but Susan's fears went along with her.

A few minutes later Susan stood in the vestibule of St. Theresa's. In a half dream she watched their friends walk softly into the pews and take their seats.

She could see the fringes of greenery, the large baskets of white lilies, and the burning white candles around the altar. The soft notes of the organ floated into the space around her.

Susan saw the beatific expression on her sister's lovely face as she stood there holding the arm of their tall, gray-haired father. And Louise, who was so happy, thought it was just a *bump* with her and Jeff. But then Louise didn't know Jeff.

"And I didn't know Jeff either," Susan reflected, while she waited for the wedding march to begin.

She'd met Jeff on the day he graduated from college. She knew him as a charming Jeff who wore a flashing smile, and teased her constantly. His temper was as quick as his smile or his laugh, but he was never angry long. He was a Jeff who thrilled her with extravagant poetic compliments. He'd say, "Your eyes are like the bluest violets in the woodlands. Your hair is like the Milky Way. Oh, Honey, you're SUPER—absolutely SUPER!"

Jeff was working in a department store when they married. Every evening the minute the store closed, he rushed to their tiny furnished apartment. He kissed her as though he had not seen her in weeks, and half the

time insisted upon taking her out to dinner. He spent money wildly. Then one evening three weeks after they were married, Jeff said nonchalantly as he flung his hat on one of their two kitchen chairs:

"Quit my job, Honey."

Susan laid down the plate of hot biscuits she had taken up.

"Why?" she asked, a strange fear taking hold of her.

Jeff shrugged his shoulders. "Oh—manager thought he was smart. He bawled me out."

"Oh!" said Susan in dismay. She knew the rest. Jeff's temper. She knew what she had denied to herself before now. That Jeff simply hadn't grown up—that he had no idea of what responsibility meant.

But Jeff laughed. He pinched her cheeks playfully.

"Oh—the end of the world hasn't come," he said confidently. "Wasn't much future to that job anyway—I'll get another."

Jeff didn't get another job right away. They went to Susan's home to eat. In the end, Susan's father found Jeff a job at a service station, and they went back to the apartment with a turn of groceries—bought on credit.

But after that, Jeff went from job to job. Always it was the

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ame—no promotion, or his temper. It did no good when Susan explained that it took time for a man to prove himself in a job—that it was time for him to stop acting like a child. But Jeff wanted to give her everything, he said—everything. He didn't want to wait forever for a promotion.

The time came when jobs were not so easy to get, and news got around that Jeff wouldn't stick to a job. Time came when Jeff stopped laughing—when he spoke harshly to Susan. There were quarrels and tears. They were forced to move into the house with Susan's father and sister. Jeff became discouraged after a while, and then he sat around the big two-story house nearly all day. Susan could think of nothing else to say to him.

Then one day Susan knew she was going to have a baby, and for a little while there was joy in her heart. Jeff took her in his arms and pledged himself to find another job and stick to it.

But when two weeks had passed and Jeff had found no job, and had apparently ceased trying, Susan's joy evaporated as the dew evaporates in the heat of the sun.

Then came the final quarrel. Susan blamed herself afterwards—calling him a "*spoiled brat*," a "*do-nothing*." It was the worst

quarrel they had ever had. In the dark hours of midnight, Jeff had stamped from the house and left.

For three weeks Susan's mind was a mist of torment. It seemed that there was a great cavern in her heart.

One night Jeff called her over the telephone. He was in Charleston. "Gee, Honey," he said tenderly, just like the old loving Jeff. "I've got a job—a good job."

For a few moments Susan forgot everything in the joy of hearing Jeff's voice. He sounded different—somehow more serious than she had ever known him. He added, half-doubtfully, "You'll come, Honey, won't you?—I'll get an apartment."

But still Susan was afraid. She hung up the receiver without giving him an answer. There was the baby, and what if Jeff quit his job again with them in Charleston? Or spent money faster than he made it? And so Susan didn't go, and Jeff wrote—once—twice—three times.

"I've grown up, Honey," he said. "Honest I have. I'll stick this time. Hurry—hurry up, Hon! I need you so!"

The stirring strains of a stately wedding march brought Susan's mind back to the church. As one in a trance, she walked

slowly down the aisle, keeping step with the organ music. She saw Father Flanigan taking his place at the altar, and there were Tommy and his best man coming from the side door.

Susan took her appointed place before a basket of white lilies. She saw Louise, leaning on the arm of their father, coming down the aisle. Louise was smiling softly, Susan realized. She remembered with a sudden ecstatic catch in her throat, when she had walked down that same aisle to meet Jeff at the altar.

Dreamily, Susan heard the words of the ceremony, and it seemed as if the priest were speaking to her instead of her sister. Part of the time she seemed not to hear at all except in her own consciousness.

"For richer, for poorer—for better, for worse." On and on the words flowed. And then—*"Till death do us part."*

At those words Susan trembled, and suddenly it was as if a great light flashed before her eyes. She had taken Jeff for what he was—no matter. She had not promised to love him part of the time, or if he did just the right thing always. No! She had promised to love him no matter what happened. She had promised to let only death part them.

And at that moment Susan knew more—knew that she had failed too. She had been too quick to condemn Jeff. She had upbraided him, when she might have encouraged him. And here she was, with Jeff in Charleston—wanting her, and needing her. He was trying—really trying this time, something told her. He had even received a raise.

The ceremony went on, and every word seemed to erase part of Susan's fear of marriage—her fear of the future with Jeff. She was free of fear—free—free!

Susan's heart leaped, and her feet were feathery-light as she walked back up the aisle of the church. When she reached the door she quickened her pace. She went down the steps almost running. As quickly as she could, she left the crowd. She hurried down the side of the church, across the back lot and into the back door of her father's house.

She slipped into her father's den, and without even taking time to turn on the light gave Jeff's telephone number in Charleston.

Why, oh why, didn't the operator hurry. Maybe—oh, maybe, she would have time to pack before the next train left.

"For richer, for poorer—for better, for worse," Susan's heart sang.

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Books

- { Father Flanagan of Boys Town
- Our Father's House
- The Tears of the Blind Lions
- Life and Miracles of St. Benedict
- Our Family Book of Life

FATHER FLANAGAN OF BOYS TOWN. By Fulton Oursler and Will Oursler. Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N.Y. 302 pp. \$3.00.

Surely it is a proof of the perversity of human nature that when a philosophy as tremendously vital as that of Father Flanagan is brought before us, we do so very little about it. Here is the story of a man who said, "There is no such thing as a bad boy," who believed it as he believed in God—and who proved it! And so what? Go into almost any school (and we may include very many homes, too) and you will find this attitude towards children: "Here are the rules you must keep. If you don't keep them, you will be punished." In other words, the fundamental attitude is (though those who have it would deny it vehemently): "Children are bad. The only way they

can be made to do good is by force." Let them do as they are told; let them not get into any trouble; let them conform to a lot of exterior rules—then they are being good children. Let us not consider the *interior* feelings of the child, his mental attitude towards the things he is made to do. Let him just *do* them, whether he believes them to be good or not.

This is what we have been doing with our children for a long time. And this is why we had need of a man like Father Flanagan, to reclaim the souls we have been turning loose in the world, souls puzzled and without understanding. And this is why we shall go on needing more and more Father Flanagans until we become convinced that by nature every child is good, though having a tendency towards evil because of the sin of Adam. Hence to keep a child good it is of the great-

est importance that he have the friendship and love of those who are concerned with his training.

The book, written with all the enthusiasm of a publisher's blurb on a book's dust jacket, is easy, fascinating reading. The account of Father Flanagan's life is a factual one, without much probing into his inner life. Actually, the book is as much concerned with Father Flanagan's boys as it is with the priest himself. The authors digress from the life to case histories at the drop of a hat—which is a good thing, since the founder of Boys Town is important not so much because of himself as because of what he did. Unfortunately, none of these case histories are sufficiently thorough of treatment. They show us the type of boy the priest had to work with, and they tell us the results he obtained; but of the all-important in-between not enough is said. What we need is a complete account, a step-by-step account of how this man's love transformed these boys from homeless outcasts, thieves, and (some of them) murderers, into exemplary men and citizens. Perhaps someday that book will be written too.

At any rate, we are left in no doubt as to the force that accomplished so much at Boys Town—it was the expression of one man's complete understanding of what Jesus Christ meant when He summed up all the commandments in two: "Love God and love your neighbor."

Theophane Gonnely, O.S.B.

OUR FATHER'S HOUSE. Edited by Sister Mariella Gable, O.S.B. Sheed & Ward, New York. 341 pp. \$3.00.

First printed in 1945, this is a welcome reissue. There are too many anthologies floating aimlessly around the literary sea, having failed to reach the port aimed at by their kind. Of all books, the anthology has least excuse for being uninteresting. It is not bringing forth anything new; it is merely bringing together, between two covers, things which are supposed already to have proven their worth. Yet how many of them fail to do that. Too often, the anthologist begins his collecting with a "theme" in mind; when he finds that there is not enough worthwhile material that will fit this theme, he is forced to include also the less worth-while, and sometimes even the downright worthless. Much better off—and more honest—is he who says, "I'm just going to include things that I myself have liked"—though that has its obvious pitfalls, too.

Here, for once, is an anthology with a "theme"—albeit a rather general one—that still manages to be an excellent collection. Sister Mariella has collected twenty-eight short stories "which ought," she feels, "for one reason or another, to be of special interest to Catholics." They are not all Catholic in the sense that they deal with the Roman Catholic Church, though many of them do; but they are Catholic in that they are concerned with

eternal truth. And because they are so concerned, they are necessarily, all of them, restatements, in one way or another, of the teachings of Christ.

There is plenty of humor here, as in Elizabeth Jordan's "Love, the Destroyer," a fine study of an adolescent's "silly" period, and in O. Henry's classic "The Gift of the Magi." There is suffering and the mercy of God in Tolstoy's "God Sees the Truth, But Waits." There are social problems: the marriage "triangle" in Richard Coleman's "The Meddlesom Cherubim"; birth-control in Richard Sullivan's "Night in August"; the race question in "The Trouble," by J.F. Powers. There are stories about nuns, stories about priests; stories about thieves and murderers—stories about every kind of person.

We can find no adverse criticism to offer any of the selections, either morally or from the standpoint of literature. The book has everything to recommend it, most of all the fact that there isn't a story in it that doesn't say something, and make the reader feel that something. To teach without "preaching" is a rare art, but you'll find it in every one of these stories.

Theophane Gonnely, O.S.B.



THE TEARS OF THE BLIND LIONS. By Thomas Merton. New Directions. 32 pp. \$1.25 (cloth), 50¢ (paper).

The output, both in quality and volume, flowing from Thomas Merton's pen since he became a Trappist is an excellent answer to those who think a contemplative in a religious house does nothing but exist in a state of exalted rest or suspended animation. "The Tears of the Blind Lions" are seventeen in number, but the selection is good and shows the subjects the poet seems most preoccupied with—so far. A new twist and turn of insight or expression shows the poet does not stale; and a new note, watched for since his ordination, appears in the last poem of the small sheaf, "Senescente Mundo." Here his priestly function begins to appear as he hymns the reviviscence of Christ's sacrifice. Another departure — into French verse—is happy in expression, but unhappy in its proofreading. There are some three or four mistakes in the accent marks.

Past and present experience have their place. The recent foundation in Utah from his Mother House is the occasion probably of "Dry Places" and its ghost-town atmosphere. Modern cities come in for their usual flaying with his sharp words. It is the cloister, however, that influences Merton most markedly; and in the simpler pictures taken from monastic life, the glow and warmth is attractive. In "The Reader," the red cheeses and bowls of milk wink

up at the poet in the elevated reader's stand with a quiet hominess; and the word "volute" used to describe the subdued soothng of monastic robes sends the mind back to Herrick's use of "liquefaction" (another unpoetic sort of word) to describe the crisp flow of Julia's silks.

His wrestlings with theological themes does not slacken; and in "Hymn for the Feast of Dung Scutus," Merton's grip is firmer as he tries to explain the unity of Persons in the Trinity. Gertrude Stein in her maulderings of "a rose is a rose is a rose" twisted the intelligible into the unintelligible, but Merton progresses in the reverse process.

A set of Migne or at least a copy of Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* is almost a necessity for the background of some of Merton's poems to the Saints, but the research to find what part is used "From the Legend of St. Clement" adds greatly to the understanding and delight in the poem.

In "A Psalm," the verses "But sound is never half so fair As when the music turns to air" ring the pleasant bell of memory, this time harking back to the verses "Heard melodies are sweet, But those unheard are sweeter" in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn." It is the poet's Cistercian vocation, however, that touches up most of his poems. Witness the subtitle to a long poem on St. John the Baptist—"On the Contemplative Vocation." In a Lady hymn, a regular and pleasant number in all his works, the same vocation is aptly given in one line,

"praying for a land without prayer"; and the physical discomfort of "our pepper shoulders" in a poem to St. Clare, "On a Day in August," can be recognized easily by anyone who has worn the religious habit in that month of the summer. There is a hair shirt for you.

There is a city-cycle too, starting with "Christopher Columbus," singing of the verdure of our continent, newly discovered, and of its growth. In "The Captives—a Psalm," the huge metropolis of any day is blasted. Then, in "The City after Noon," we are taken ahead to a world restored to its primeval lushness and an order no longer spoiled by man when "the wild confinements become empty."

All through the poems, words are used richly and freshly; and like those in others of his books, they cry for rereading and study. They are the result of contemplation; they need time and quietness of spirit at least to yield up some of the fullness of their treasure.

Alaric Scotcher, O.S.B.

LIFE AND MIRACLES OF ST. BENEDICT. A translation of Book Two of St. Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, by Odo J. Zimmermann, O.S.B., and Benedict R. Avery, O.S.B. St. John's Abbey Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. 87 pp. \$2.00 (cloth), 90¢ (paper).

Here is a smooth, easy to read, English translation of St. Gregory the Great's second book of the *Dialogues*. It is from this little book and from another one about the

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same size that we can discover the man and the saint, Benedict of Nursia. This other book is Saint Benedict's own *Rule* for monks.

In the sixth century, Pope St. Gregory's Italy was a very gloomy Italy. War with barbarian invaders from the north left great areas of Italy a wasteland. Constant dread of repeated invasions, floods, plagues, famines, all this sapped the strength of the people of Italy and broke their courage. Pope St. Gregory wrote his four books of *Dialogues* in the year 593 to honor the saints of Italy, to show his people that their homeland was a land of saints, to assure them God's protection in their distress.

The entire second book of the *Dialogues* is given to the life and miracles of St. Benedict. Writing within fifty years after the Saint's death, St. Gregory assures his readers that he has gotten his information from some of the Saint's own disciples, whom he mentions by name.

If you want to know St. Benedict you ought to read this little book. But you should also read and study St. Benedict's *Rule*. For, while St. Gregory stresses the extraordinary events of the Saint's life, the *Rule* gives us a striking insight into the character of St. Benedict in his ordinary daily life. St. Gregory himself is careful to point out (cf. p. 74 of this translation) the necessity of studying the *Rule* for a full picture of St. Benedict. This self-revelation was, of course, inadvertent on the part of St. Benedict,

but, as St. Gregory observes, "His life could not have differed from his teaching."

Knowledge of both the *Rule* and the second book of the *Dialogues* is necessary for those who would learn of St. Benedict. And this new translation of the second book of the *Dialogues* well serves the purpose of bringing to all readers St. Gregory's sketch of the Saint's life.

Marcian Strange, O.S.B.

OUR FAMILY BOOK OF LIFE

By Wilfrid Tunink, O.S.B., and Maur Burbach, O.S.B. Calligraphy by Sister Mary Leonarda, O.S.B. Designs For Christian Living, Box 5948, Westport Station, Kansas City 2, Mo. \$5.00.

Designs For Christian Living and the monks of Conception Abbey have separately made outstanding contributions of worth-while Catholic publications. The present work genuinely represents the discriminating and wholesome taste of both groups.

Being an enlargement of the few blank pages in the old family Bible for recording the births and deaths in the family, this book provides ample and artistically arranged space for recording all the sacramental high lights of the family. Emphasis is duly laid on the positive side—the richness of a full Christian life.

The chief merit of the work is the concise and inspirational explanation given for each Sacrament—an invaluable aid to parents who today feel the obligation that is

theirs to educate the children in the home.

Our Family Book of Life defies description; it should be experienced. It is a book to be lived even

more than read, but which will be better lived the oftener it is read, particularly to the children of the family.

Raban Hathorn, O.S.B.

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4-51

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TO PERFECT IT

Rule of St. Benedict

